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Lovely Lord of the Lord's Day

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Dedication and acknowledgments

Dedicated to all who wish to understand more fully the meaning of the worship day in its relationship to our Lord Jesus Christ.

We wish to acknowledge here the work of those who have assisted in this work: Carolyn MacFarland, Margaret Edge, Nancy Smith, Ellen Dana, Pastor G. Frienson, Georgia Clary, and Freda Clark.

We also thank the Lord for those whose experiences have been shared with us although names and places have usually been substituted. We have often used quotation marks to suggest a conversation, but we would be presumptuous to suggest that we have been able to recall the exact words. So far as we know and to the extent that we can recall, every experience in this work is both true and accurate, and every experience is that of individuals and not a composite.

The authors.

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Introduction

Read This Book in a Home Prayer Circle.

Have you ever been in a home prayer circle which meets for one hour once a week? If not, may we most briefly suggest one way by which one can operate.

1. Sing a chorus together, such as "Everything's All Right in My Father's House" or "Whisper a Prayer in the Morning."

2. Pray a short prayer, in which the one who leads opens the Bible to a promise such as Luke 11:13, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children; how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?"

3. In some cases home prayer circles receive a still greater blessing if the group repeats phrase by phrase after the one who prays. If you have not prayed before, we suggest that the prayer be short and something like the following: "Dear Lord, I ask You for the presence of the Holy Spirit as we study the Bible lessons in this chapter. I believe Your promise to send Him. And I thank You that I now *have* received Him in Jesus' name. Amen."

4. It is presumed that before meeting together, each one in the home prayer circle has read the assigned chapter in this book. We suggest that only one chapter be discussed each week. All should be free to participate, but all must recognize that the Bible alone has the true answers for any questions raised by the group.

5. After each member of the group has been free to share lessons learned from

the chapter under consideration, spend a few moments learning about any problems of anyone in the group. Caution should be exercised not to go into the details of the problem. It should only be identified. For example, one may say, "My husband and I are having trouble." It is not necessary to say what that trouble is. It is enough to indicate the problem. Or one may say, "Please pray for my son, who is on dope." Again, it is best that the parent not go into all that is taking place with the son. It is most important not to go farther into orbit around the problem. Another example might be, "I am out of work."

6. Each one in the group now offers a prayer. Or a conversational prayer is offered. A conversational prayer is one in which one prays but one sentence or so, which is followed by another offering but a brief sentence, and so forth. Finally, the member in charge says the concluding "Amen." No one must feel embarrassed if he or she is not at first comfortable praying audibly.

7. You may wish, just before this special prayer, to share some experiences of answered prayer. We suggest that as soon as possible these prayer experiences be those in which your prayer circle has claimed some of the Bible promises presented in the chapters of this book. Thus each time you share an answer to prayer the Lord receives credit, for you claimed a definite promise as recorded in His Word.

8. The group may close the prayer hour together by singing another chorus. Or if desired, one member of the circle may pray a short closing prayer asking God to bless each one during the interval until the next prayer circle meeting. We suggest that it is better not to engage in eating during the prayer circle. Keep the one in whose home the circle is held from feeling obligated to supply refreshments. Keep the prayer circle from being a mere social club. The prayer circles we encourage around the world are those in which we ask believingly for the Holy Spirit and in which we do not serve any dainties or drinks.

To Start a Prayer Circle

Call one or more friends on the telephone, or at your church, inviting him or her to spend one brief hour once a week in prayer. You need only two to start a prayer circle. By each one's inviting another to the next prayer circle meeting your group can grow as the weeks go by. Two alone can be considered a complete prayer circle. A group should seldom exceed six.

In prayer circles there should be no preaching—no "talks." The experience demands total participation. The only responsibility of the one leading out is to follow the simple suggested outline above.

One lady invited friends to come and form a prayer group, but no one responded. Finally she decided to ring doorbells. Eventually she was instrumental in starting not one prayer circle, merely, but several—one in her own home and others in various homes of friends! It changed the atmosphere of a merely "good church" into one of spiritual activity and love.

I Saw a Rose

He had a rose with petals soft,
As real and true and sweet
As any bloom in garden fair
That he might chance to meet.

And yet I found myself content
To synthesize my bloom;
It was an artificial thing
And stood there in my room.

His shed a fragrance all around;
Mine was the work of man.
It had no lovely scent as his,
Although it had a plan.

Mine had a form, a stem, a bloom,
Yet fragrance it had not.
His rose was living, gentle, sweet—
Mine artificial, bought.

And then I meditated, prayed,
And pondered much, and thought
The worship day is not enough:
It has no fragrance brought

Into the life unless our Lord
Pervades its roots, its stalk.
Its bloom, its leaf, its every part:
And life divine had brought.

O Holy Spirit, how I seek
By earnest, heartfelt prayer
To call attention to Thy Rose
Whose fragrance fills the air.

1 Seven Lawyers Stumped

Attorney Krueger had been tutored in the philosophy of law.

Jim Evans, a veteran of World War II, had endured the rigors of the war and of two years' internment in a Japanese prison camp. When the war was over, Jim returned to his wife Mary and his two little children. Through the years Jim and Mary had been frugal. They had saved several thousand dollars with which to build a humble cottage they could call their own. After searching for some time for a suitable building site, Jim and Mary finally decided on and paid for a lot. They purchased materials from a local lumber company and, full of anticipation, began to build their "dream home." You can imagine their delight as they saw their small cottage taking shape according to their plans. It was to be their very own. Though not large, it would be big enough for both their little Jimmy Junior and Louisa each to have a bedroom. One day while Jim and Mary were standing beside their cottage admiring their home—as the builders were nailing down boards and sawing timbers—they were handed a disturbing notice. Bessie Gump, a stranger to them, sent a message claiming that she had title to this plot of ground. It said that everything being built thereon was also hers by law.

In great anxiety, Jim rushed over to Mr. Baker, the attorney who had made out

the papers when Jim and Mary had paid for the lot. The attorney was puzzled. After researching the message he shook his head and said he was sorry, but that he was powerless to save their home—or even the lot.

Jim rushed over to see J. A. Lee, another attorney of the same city, begging for help. But Mr. Lee, after listening to the sad story and looking carefully over the papers, said, "There is nothing this office can do for you, Mr. Evans." In deep distress Jim rushed from one attorney to another, vainly seeking help to protect his lifetime savings, but without success.

All told Jim had sought help from seven attorneys in his city. Without exception, he received the same sad reply, "Sorry, but you do not have a case."

"Have you seen George Krueger?" asked one of Jim's friends. "He is the gentleman to see. If anyone can help you, Mr. Krueger can and will."

"There is no hope," Jim sadly answered. "I have received the same reply from seven attorneys already. They tell me I can never recover the loss. My savings have gone down the drain."

"You can't lose anything by just slipping in at his office," his friend insisted. "I am told that he has handled many a case that seemed hopeless. Why don't you try once more?"

Reluctantly Jim made his way to George Krueger's office the next morning. Mr. Krueger listened attentively as Jim told his story. Then with a smile he replied, "Jim, I believe I can help you."

"Help me to what?" asked Jim with a puzzled look on his face.

"Help you to save your home, and if not that, then at least to salvage all the money you have put into the house and the parcel of land!"

"I don't believe a word of it, Mr. Krueger," Jim blurted out, half reproachful that he had so much as tried an eighth lawyer. "I've been to seven lawyers already!"

Then, with the assurance born of a basic knowledge and understanding of law, Mr. Krueger replied, "Yes, but now you have come to the fountainhead of law."

As Mr. Krueger told me this experience, he interrupted his story to explain the difference between lawyers.

He said, "You see there are two kinds of lawyers—those who know the laws as they appear on our statute books, and those who know the philosophy of law. Forty years ago," he continued with a twinkle in his eye, "I studied law from a professor who impressed upon us students the fact that all law has a basic philosophy. Unless we know this philosophy, all other legal knowledge is superficial. How many times," Mr. Krueger went on, "this wise professor stressed this great principle—the philosophy of law. He used to say to us students, 'Young men, if you memorized every law in the book, and these laws were all changed overnight, you would be of no aid to a client. That is, unless you

had studied and mastered the philosophy of law. If you have mastered this, you are equipped to serve the public who come to you in times of need.'

"I never forgot that statement," Mr. Krueger stated, "and it has served me well through the forty years I have practiced law."

I repeated in my mind over and over the expression "philosophy of law." What did he mean by this term? But I was not long to wait as Mr. Krueger went on to relate step by step how he saved Jim's investment.

"I promised the young man," Mr. Krueger said, "if I do not win your case, it will cost you nothing. If I do win it, you will owe me \$400 for my services."

"Fair enough," Jim Evans agreed. "Go ahead and see what you can do."

"The first thing I did," continued Mr. Krueger, "was to instruct my son John, who is also a lawyer, to prepare a brief on the philosophy of law from the days of the Magna Charta down to the present. So my son went to the library, and in a matter of days had prepared a beautiful, yet succinct, brief on the basis of all law. Part of it had to do with the fundamental rights of the individual citizen. The philosophy of law covers, for one thing, the right of any citizen to enjoy what every other citizen in similar situations freely enjoys under law and the Constitution of the United States."

"Jim Evans had served his country well. Now as a citizen of that country he had a right to be protected in his basic rights as an American citizen."

"I learned that," Mr. Krueger repeated, "back in college under that wise instructor."

"Using my philosophy of law," Mr. Krueger continued, with his deep and musical voice, "I presented my case to the judge. And to make a long story short, the young man's home was saved. And Jim and his family moved in."

You should have seen the twinkle in Mr. Krueger's eyes as he went into various details of how he presented the case to the judge. What the judge himself did not know or had forgotten about the philosophy of law Mr. Krueger diplomatically made plain to him.

Once again Mr. Krueger stressed the disadvantage of a lawyer's knowing only the letter of the law. "I could name another lawyer of the same city, for instance," continued Mr. Krueger, "who never studied law in a formal way. He merely learned the laws by rote. He then secured a license to practice. But he does not know how to prepare a case, simply because he does not know the philosophy of the law he claims to be practicing."

As I walked out of Mr. Krueger's office, my mind dwelt quite at length on his term, "philosophy of law." I thought of how this principle applies to Christianity and the rules of the Scriptures. I said to myself, "Wouldn't it be tragic for a professed Christian to be handling the Word of God, apparently obeying its precepts, and never learning the basic philosophy of our Lord? Would it not be

sad indeed for a person to stand before the Judge of all the universe at the last great day and hear Him say, "Depart from me; I never knew you," when that person thought he was ready to meet his Maker?

And yet the Lord Jesus states that this very thing is going to take place. And not to a few only. "Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name done many wonderful works? And then will I profess unto them, I never knew you: depart from me, ye that work iniquity."¹

This tragedy exists because these "many" have not learned the basic philosophy of Bible truth. They are likened to men who build a house on the sand. They have no foundation.² Thus they lose their home—their eternal home.

This book, *Lovely Lord of the Lord's Day*, is written with the prayer that we shall all understand better the divine philosophy of the holy worship day. It is the aim of these chapters to present the thought that a favorite author of mine has expressed: "The testing truth for this time is . . . genuine philosophy to those who appropriate it."³ Consequently, we must learn the philosophy of our Lord as seen in the holy worship day if we are to enter into its rare delights and find that the entire life is imbued with the principles of heaven.

We shall "study not the philosophy of men's conjectures, but study the philosophy of Him who is truth."⁴ The Word of God contains "the most profound philosophy."⁵

The religious people of Christ's nation were the most rigorous sticklers for the worship day the world has ever known. Yet their basic philosophy was diametrically opposed to that of Jesus. When Jesus healed the cripple at the pool at Bethesda on the worship day (see John 5), He stirred up a hornet's nest. When He opened the eyes of the blind man (see John 9), He was charged with Sabbath breaking by the Jewish rulers. When His disciples gleaned in the grain field on the holy day (see Matthew 12), the so-called protectors of the worship day blew a fuse.

Again and again they declared that Christ and His disciples had broken the holy day. Jesus replied that He understood the meaning—the true significance—of the worship day. He looked into their protesting faces and exclaimed, "But if ye had known what this meaneth, . . . ye would not have condemned the guiltless."⁶

Had they but gone to the "Lord . . . of the sabbath day"⁷ and learned of Him the significance of worship, they might have been saved from murdering the Lord to whom His day, rightly understood, brings honor.

The rigorous opponents of our Lord thought they were protecting His holy day. They were guardians of the law. They were teachers of religion. But they were like a certain sentry who marched back and forth, back and forth, with

martial tread. He was most conscientious in his duty. With gun in place, and with proper uniform, he patrolled. But when a tourist inquired as to what he was guarding, he confessed his ignorance. When the tourist inquired of a superior officer, he too did not know. On up the line of superior officials the traveler asked, only to learn that not one knew what the guard was protecting.

The Holy Scriptures declare that the very people who had the Holy Scriptures in their reach, who read them every week, fulfilled their prophecies in destroying Jesus Christ. "For they that dwell at Jerusalem, and their rulers, *because they knew him not*, nor yet the voices of the prophets which are read every sabbath day, they have fulfilled them in condemning him."⁸

The basic *philosophy* of all Bible doctrine is summed up in these words: "This is life eternal, that they might know thee the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom thou has sent."⁹ Our Lord declared that this is the very purpose of His holy day, "Moreover also I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them," "Hallow my sabbaths; and they shall be a sign between me and you, that ye may know that I am the Lord your God."¹⁰

The Word of God declares that when Jesus comes again, those who are ready to meet Him will be like Him. "Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God; therefore the world knoweth us not, because it knew him not. Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him: for we shall see him as he is. And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure."¹¹

We become like Him by beholding Him. "We all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory even as by the Spirit of the Lord."¹²

Thus every teaching of the Bible is a telescope, as it were, through which we look into the heavens and see our Lord. We are, in each doctrine, to explore His character, His plans, His purposes.

Thus we can cry out, "For me to live is Christ."¹³

The great apostle Paul made clear that all Bible truth is "in Christ." "I say the truth in Christ, I lie not, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Ghost."¹⁴

Our Lord Himself has repeatedly declared that His holy day is given for the express purpose that we might know Him. Kindly pray as we repeat two texts of scripture we have already noticed: "Moreover also I gave them my sabbaths, to be a sign between me and them, that they might know that I am the Lord that sanctify them," "Hallow my sabbaths; and they shall be a sign between me and you, that ye may know that I am the Lord your God."¹⁵

To all our readers we present this beautiful and delightful Lord as seen through His great telescope—the Lord's holy day.

As we do this, let us cluster around the cross of Christ. Let us behold the matchless beauty of our Lord, "the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world."¹⁶ And may we all cry out in humble rapture, "God forbid that I should glory, save in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world is crucified unto me, and I unto the world."¹⁷ And like Thomas, though slow to understand and know the risen Lord, be led to exclaim with rapture, "My Lord and my God."¹⁸

"He's the Lily of the Valley, the bright and morning Star,

He's the fairest of ten thousand to my soul."

And when He returns for His own, what a joy it will be to look up into His wonderful face and with sweetest assurance shout aloud, "Lo, this is our God; we have waited for him and he will save us: this is the Lord; we have waited for him, we will be glad and rejoice in his salvation."¹⁹

Dear Father in heaven, "Doth not wisdom cry? and understanding put forth her voice?"²⁰ I thank Thee, Lord, that Thou hast promised, "Counsel is mine, and sound wisdom: I am understanding; I have strength. By me kings reign, and princes decree justice."²¹ I ask, believingly, that this wisdom, this judgment, this divine philosophy may become part of my very being. I claim triumphantly Thy promise, "Blessed is the man that heareth me, watching daily at my gates. . . . Whoso findeth me findeth life, and shall obtain favour of the Lord."²² In Thy blessed Son's name. Amen.

Reflection: As with a friend or in a prayer circle or in your personal meditations we suggest you go over the seven facts following, turning to the Bible itself and reading each text cited. Then reconstruct the story of this chapter to see its application to the Scripture read.

TRUE PHILOSOPHY

What grand philosophy
To know the majesty
of Christ my Lord.

His true psychology,
His great theology,
Is in His word.

In concluding this study let us observe seven Bible facts:

1. God's chosen nation in the days of Jesus did not understand the true philosophy of religion, for they were found "condemning" its author (Acts 13:27).

2. Spiritual discernment is not something received apart from Christ, for *He* "is made unto us wisdom" (1 Corinthians 1:30).

3. All spiritual truth is "in Christ" (Romans 9:1).

4. The word *philosophy* as found in Colossians 2:8 comes from an original word meaning *love of wisdom*. Therefore, for one to love wisdom without loving its Source leads to "vain deceit."

5. Only "he that hath the Son hath life" (1 John 5:12).

6. He promises that "the meek will he guide in judgment" (Psalm 25:9).

7. To be protected against the philosophy which leads to "vain deceit" (Colossians 2:8), our Lord offers to make us "complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power" (Colossians 2:10).

References:

1. Matthew 7:22, 23.
2. See Matthew 7:24-29.
3. *Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 211.
4. *Ibid.*, p. 319.
5. *Fundamentals of Christian Education*, p. 432.
6. Matthew 12:7.
7. Matthew 12:8.
8. Acts 13:27.
9. John 17:3.
10. Ezekiel 20:12, 20.
11. 1 John 3:1-3.
12. 2 Corinthians 3:18.
13. Philippians 1:21.
14. Romans 9:1.
15. Ezekiel 20:12, 20.
16. John 1:29.
17. Galatians 6:14.
18. John 20:28.
19. Isaiah 25:9.
20. Proverbs 8:1.
21. Proverbs 8:14, 15.
22. Proverbs 8:34, 35.

2

X Rays Don't Lie

Tom Manor's fabulous new physical-heart experience.

Tom Manor's story is one of the most thrilling of all physical-heart miracles we have ever heard. We met him, talked with him, double-checked on this story, and came to the conclusion that it is true. There are medical records "a mile long" to substantiate the miracle.

And more than this, Tom is not an enthusiast. He is not given to exaggeration. He shies away from publicity. I asked him to tell his story in one of our public meetings. He wanted to do so, but his timidity, his self-effacement prevented him from doing so. There is nothing about him to indicate anything but genuineness and sincerity.

His is an account given to strengthen our faith, enliven our hope, and deepen our love for the "One altogether lovely."

We prayerfully share it with you. And while it is an outstanding miracle, it fits completely into the Bible philosophy of our wonderful Creator. He invites men and women everywhere to come to Him and receive new hearts, new attitudes, and a new lease on life.¹

Tom was born in a county hospital where he thinks no records were kept. He was put up for adoption and two weeks later was placed in a foster home. His

foster parents were not merely poor financially but in every other way. Tom never knew his own parents and was never able to trace them. When he was six weeks old, his foster father left home. His foster mother was basically a fine woman, and a solid Christian up until her husband left. Then she became a confirmed alcoholic.

Tom lived in the home of this alcoholic woman until she died when he was fifteen years old.

About the time that Tom was entering his teen years, an evangelistic team came to Denver, Colorado. They continued in the area for about a year, conducting most inspiring meetings, presenting the beauty of the Bible in a way that attracted large audiences. Because Tom lived near the large hall where the meetings were held, he went over one night. That night did something to his life! So he continued attending night after night for several weeks.

"These evangelists brought the first stability into my life, and it looked good to me," Tom told me. It was such a contrast to Tom's homelife. The love, the hope, and the confidence in a better way and in a future life without the sorrows Tom had known was so wonderful that his whole soul went out to this free salvation offered in Jesus Christ. Tom had to work hard and had gone only to the seventh grade. He had little in the line of clothing. He couldn't recall ever having sat down to a meal!

"I managed somehow to find little jobs to do to earn enough money to eat," Tom reflected. And speaking of those days, he said, "They were bad times. Still, if you sincerely wanted to work, you could find a job." And that is what Tom did for years. It was not a question of being old enough, Tom pointed out. "If you were big enough, or strong enough, you could land some kind of job."

"I went to work in the celery flats when I was thirteen years old. But I was fortunate in that I was big for my age. The law required one to be fifteen, but the farmers didn't care. I made ten cents an hour and worked ten hours a day."

"My mother said, 'That's fine. You're making six dollars a week, you can pay me five dollars.' So I kept the dollar that was left and stretched it every way a dollar can stretch."

"This was just about the time the Depression hit the country. When I left the celery farms, a man with five children came to see me to ask if I could use my influence to get him my job. I was leaving to work at a gas station. That might not seem like much of a job. But coming up as I had, it was a big jump ahead for an untrained kid. I had gone down at night and worked from six to ten o'clock to learn the job."

Finally they put Tom on the payroll. So he quit the hard work in the celery flats and took on the gas station for several years. While there Tom's salary increased to twenty cents an hour. He continued to pay his foster mother five dollars a

week, which she used to buy alcohol. Poor Tom had had a succession of stepfathers. They were heavy drinkers that his mother met downtown. She would bring one home and in some cases marry him. In others she did not bother to go through the ceremony. The last one to be her husband was a large Polish man.

One day when Tom came home the stepfather said, "Your mother's upstairs in your bed and she's dead. Go up and take a look." Just like that. So Tom went upstairs, and there in his little room he found her as the stepfather had said.

Then the man said, "OK, take whatever you can carry in one suitcase and get out!" At fifteen years of age Tom was completely on his own.

"I took my suitcase and started down the road, not knowing where to go. I thought of the YMCA. Something in the name caught my attention: Young Men's Christian Association. Surely, I thought this would be different from just a hotel. So I went there and talked to the manager. I told him I didn't have any money but would like a room until payday. He was very nice and gave me a room and said I could have it as long as I wanted it. I had clean sheets, a pillow, and a shower. I had never had these at home. My troubles were over."

One day the manager called Tom and asked if he had ever been to camp. Tom replied that he had not. Whereupon the manager said he would send him to camp, without charge. So Tom went to camp for two weeks. "That was heaven to me," Tom said. "I thought there could be nothing beyond this. I stayed at the YMCA for four years. It was at this time that I went to evangelistic meetings. These meetings were a revelation to me. I was captured."

"I had never known anything about love. If I opened my mouth at home, someone put his fist in. We didn't sit down and discuss things there. I have no doubt that these early years of sorrow and degradation without hope had a direct bearing on the health of my later life. Many times as a small child I was left alone for days at a time. Yet somehow I didn't enter a life of crime."

When the evangelistic meetings were finished, Tom was baptized.

Some time after Tom was married he became the manager of the surgical department at a well-known hospital in Colorado. He worked very closely with the doctors there and formed an excellent relationship with them. "If I had any medical problems," he said, "I could consult with any one of thirty doctors."

In 1965 Tom had gall bladder surgery. He was apparently recovering very well. But on the sixth day in the hospital, as he was sitting on the edge of the bed, a pain struck his heart.

"I was terrified," Tom explained. "I didn't realize what it was. It had never happened to me before. It's different from any other pain. It was not like a stomach cramp. It paralyzed my left side immediately, including my arm and leg." (Tom is six feet two inches in height and weighs about 200 pounds.)

"Several strange things happened. I realized I was going to lose consciousness; and, since I couldn't move my left side, I fell back across the bed toward the control panel and hit the red button before I lost consciousness. Just before this, I learned later, the supervisor of nurses on that floor, Mrs. Waller, a Christian lady, had been in a meeting at the extreme end of this floor.

"An overwhelming feeling had come over her that she should leave that meeting and come down this hall. In all her years of nursing she had never done this before. But she excused herself and walked down the hall.

"Just as she got to my door, I fell across the bed. She rushed in, flipped me over, and gave me closed chest massage, which probably initially saved my life. She had never done this before and has never done it since.

"Surely God impressed her to leave that meeting and impressed her how to help me. Then the doctors arrived and worked on me for several hours.

"They called in a heart specialist, and about noon they decided to try to move me down to the intensive care unit. Several nurses moved the bed, IV equipment, and all down there to make final preparations for my death.

"A minister was called, and also my wife and my son from school. A room across the hall was set up for them."

During that day Tom successively went in and out of consciousness. That evening he asked the cardiologist if he was going to die. The physician replied that he thought so.

This man didn't know much about religion, but he believed that if a patient was going to die, he ought to know it, so that he could make whatever preparation he desired. "We all do it our own way," the doctor said. Tom appreciated his honesty.

"I was at peace," Tom said, "even though I could hear all the preparations that were being made. I felt that I was beyond this world and all that was going on, and it was wonderful. I was ready to meet my Lord. I made it through the night somehow. The cardiologist made this statement to me days later. 'I don't know who you know that I don't know. We had nothing to do with your surviving this thing. By all means you should have died.' He said that I had suffered extensive heart damage."

Tom was in the hospital six or eight weeks, slowly regaining his health. Still he continued to have heart pains when he exerted himself. This continued for five years. Tom said, "It wasn't bad enough to give up my work, but it was bad enough that I never forgot. I didn't have a day in five years free of chest pain. Many times I would begin a day and the pain would start. I would just hope it would go away, and that's an awful way to live, expecting to die all the time. The doctors said there was nothing they could do. A couple times I was in the hospital for heart spasms that wouldn't let go."

Then in October of 1971 Tom came to his office in the housekeeping department of the hospital where he was currently employed. It was about six o'clock in the morning. He was sorting linens when suddenly he felt a terrific chest pain. "I sat down at my desk," Tom said, "and felt that I was going to lose on this one. So I managed to call my wife and asked her to bring my heart pills down. She rushed in, and I took a couple of them and told her not to call anyone, because I didn't want to get the whole hospital stirred up. Then I took a couple more pills.

"But the pain was not relieved. So I decided to take a couple more and then told her to call someone. The pain lessened a bit, and the emergency crew came and took me for treatments. They put on a monitor and got some tapes. I was placed in intensive care for a week. Then I came home and went back to work without any further problems.

"Dr. Jones talked to me about negotiating with the medical center in Colorado Springs for an arterial transplant. I didn't understand the import of this, but I didn't mind if he negotiated. I felt that it would be unlikely that I could fit into this. For one thing, it's very expensive—prohibitive for me. Then there were many candidates ahead of me. There are few that the medical profession would be able to serve. But I agreed to apply. About a week later my physician called me and said there were thirty-two people on the transplant waiting list, but that he would keep trying. Then two more weeks went by and the Colorado Springs medical center called one Friday evening and said, 'Dr. Hoskins wants you down here at nine o'clock on Sunday.'

"I told them that I couldn't leave my responsibilities here where I am employed any more than they could leave theirs at the medical center. They explained that they would have to take my name off the list in that case. I said, 'So be it.'

"They made it clear that they wouldn't be able to call back. But I felt that my obligations were important where I was, and I could not walk off on such short notice. But the following Monday they called me back. They said they had made arrangements, and if I would get my house in order, they would give me six weeks to do it. I agreed, and six weeks later I went down to the center.

"Mr. Fly, our administrator, said he would send down his former secretary, Miss Johnson, to help in the office while I was gone. I appreciated this. She came down and said, 'I talked to my brother-in-law about you.'

"I said, 'That's nice. Who is your brother-in-law?'

"She said, 'The minister who baptized you years ago.' She told me that he and his brother were coming to see me. I hadn't seen them for twenty-two years, and I was overjoyed.

"That very night they and their wives came to see me. They said, 'We heard you were in trouble. Why didn't you call us?' They wanted to pray for me. They

said they had three 'propositions' to put before the Lord. I had misgivings, because I wouldn't do this myself. They said they were going to ask for a miracle, but only if I would agree to it. First, they would ask for a miracle of healing without surgery. Then if we couldn't have that, they would ask that an angel would be in the operating room, taking charge of everything that was done. Then if that wasn't the way it should be, we would accept my dying quietly with dignity and no regrets, never feeling that the Lord had shortchanged me. They asked if I could agree to this, and I did. This concept is in harmony with Isaiah 42:16. So we all knelt down and prayed.

"One of them picked up the Bible and opened it to the text he wanted. I'd been praying for many years and have had a good life. But for the first time I felt that I could accept God's will as mine. So when I went to the center, I had no fear at all. However, I also put the miracle thought out of my mind completely. I knew God is able. But I didn't count on it for me.

"I went through three days of tests. Then came the last test. It was the one I went down for in the first place. Into the groin of the right leg the doctors insert a catheter and a probe which goes up directly into the heart. At my request, they allowed me to watch all this on the TV screen. I had to sign a paper. But I thought I'd never have a chance like this again. I had a local anesthetic and didn't really suffer any pain, but just a fear of the unknown. The next step was to be open-heart surgery. A team, under Dr. Ham, from another hospital was coming over to do it. There are thirty in the team. The cost was \$25,000 just for the basics. Mine turned out to be complicated.

"After three days of testing, they had a conference. Dr. Johnson and two other physicians came to talk to me. They explained to me about the probe (angiogram) planned for the following day. They said there were some things that they felt I should know. The procedure might trigger a massive heart attack. Or I might bleed to death, since the physicians must split a vein and sometimes mishaps occur.

"Anyway, I agreed to go ahead. Then they wanted me to sign a surgical permit. They said I needed immediate surgery. Ordinarily they make the probe and then send you home for a week to a month while things are getting ready. Then you come back. 'But we have decided,' the doctors said, 'that you have lost one artery. Also you have lost 80 percent of the second artery. There are only three. If the third artery becomes affected in any way, nobody can save you. So we want you to sign the permit so we can do the probe, just to confirm what we know we will find. Then we will go right into the heart surgery room and go ahead.' They asked me to call my family and have them fly down that night. I did, and they came immediately.

"I wasn't too happy with all of this. So I asked the doctors what they based

their decision on. They said all the various tests that had been done there, the tapes that had been done elsewhere at the time of my heart spasm, and the original records also from the third hospital, all together had forced their conclusion.

"So I agreed to sign the permit. The next morning a team of ten doctors went through this procedure with the probe. When the doctor got this little tube right up alongside the heart, he told me to watch it, while he tried to turn it over and slip it into the heart. Then he pulled it back, and by means of a little hook on the end of the probe, the surgeon hooked it inside the heart.

"There I was talking to a man who was pushing on a tube in my leg that I could see dropping into my heart!

"So the surgeon got the hook fastened to the heart. The doctors had a consultation right there. One of the doctors came over to me and said, 'We're in lots of trouble.'

"I said, 'Well, I know I am. What's the problem?' Here I was right in the middle of this thing, and he scared me with this statement. 'Well,' he said, 'everything we told you last night—forget about it. It just isn't there!'

"I didn't know what he was talking about. But they went ahead to check it through. It took a couple of hours. They said I would be taken back to my room, and I was not to move until they talked to me.

"Two days went by. The third morning, my wife received word that she was to come to the hospital in the afternoon. They took me down to a little room on a stretcher. The walls of the room were just like an X-ray viewer. There were rows of pictures there. Dr. Johnson, chief of the X-ray department was there. My wife and I sat there wondering what kind of news they had for us.

"Another heart doctor started to enter the room. Then he started to leave. But Dr. Johnson called out to him to stay and look at something for him.

"So he showed him the tapes that Dr. Jones had taken at the other hospital previously. He asked the heart doctor what he thought of them. The other doctor replied, 'I think whoever owns these tapes is in a lot of trouble.' Then Dr. Johnson showed him some heart pictures and particularly pointed out one line there. He asked the doctor what he thought about *that*.

" 'Well,' the other doctor said, 'I think whoever owns this is pretty fortunate.'

"Then Dr. Johnson told him that the same man who owned the pictures owned also the tapes. But the other doctor said there was no way that tape could have come from that heart. So while sitting there hearing this conversation, I began to piece things together. This doctor put his hand on my shoulder and said, 'If that's the picture of your arterial system, you are a very lucky fellow.'

"Dr. Johnson said, 'I don't know about your heart attack and the problems you had before. I don't know anything about this.' Then he pointed out the rows

of pictures around the walls of that room. He showed me mine. 'You can live for a hundred years with your heart,' he said. 'You can go home today. And I don't care what you eat or drink. With the years you have left there is no way you can do anything to hurt that heart, *because it's brand-new!*'

"He showed me that the inside grows old just as the outside does, with wrinkles and similar things. He showed me other pictures of heart muscles. They grow soft with age. But my three arteries stood up there like new grape vines. He said, 'I'd give almost anything in the world if that were a picture of me.' He said my heart muscle was strong and straight and perfect. He said, 'I don't know what happened from the time you left the fourth floor to go to the second floor, but you have a new heart. Believe it or not, this heart has never had one blemish or spot or damage.'

"So I said, 'Would you call this a miracle?'

" 'No, I wouldn't,' he answered, 'because we don't want people coming over from hill and dale to this center looking for miracles.'

"He said I was a fortunate person—an old man with a young man's heart. So he told me to go back up to my room again until he personally told me to move. He wanted to go over it all and study it conclusively again.

"The next afternoon he came up to my room and said, 'Put on your pants and go back to work. There isn't a thing to restrict you—you can do anything you want to do. There isn't a thing wrong with you!'

"The pain in my heart had been continuous until I went in to have the probe. It had hurt as much during that night from the sheer anxiety of it all as it ever had. Those doctors had no doubt that what they saw on the screen would be evident when they performed the surgery. But to their amazement they found a healthy heart. I had experienced this chest pain for five years without a day of freedom until this time. I felt like jumping up and down, singing and dancing. Unless you've gone through all this, you wouldn't understand.

"Just a couple weeks ago I went skiing without any pain at all. My wife and son and I knelt down and thanked the Lord with tears for what He had done. He had given me a new heart as the Bible says He can do. When I was sent back to my room, I was still afraid to move. I feared the doctor would come across something that he had failed to see before. He acted so confused about it all that I thought this could easily happen. But when he came up to my room and told me to go home, I knew it was over. He had X rays, slides, movies of the surgical procedures. What more did we need?"

As I sat in Tom Manor's office, his face was deeply sincere. Others testified to the truthfulness of his story.

Concluding, Tom said, "My courage is good. If the Lord can take me, a nobody, and perform a miracle like this for me, who had hardly asked for

it—well, it really humbles me. The night I prayed with the ministers I wrote it off. Not as a lack of faith, but I felt I couldn't ask for such a thing from the Lord. And again, when the doctors were at my bedside, asking me to sign the surgery permit, I thought, 'Well, there goes the miracle; here comes the surgery.' As I look back to the beginning of this story, of the time when the supervisor of nurses massaged my heart and kept me alive to this day, I am overwhelmed at the goodness of the Lord to me."

As great as was the miracle of healing our Lord performed on Tom Manor, it in no way exceeds the new spiritual heart He gives to all who ask the Great Physician. It is all based on the creative power of our wonderful Lord. Both forgiveness of sin and physical restoration have the same divine source.

"Whether is it easier," Jesus said, "to say to the sick of the palsy, Thy sins be forgiven thee; or to say, Arise, and take up thy bed, and walk? But that ye may know that the Son of man hath power on earth to forgive sins, (he saith to the sick of palsy,) I say unto thee, Arise, and take up thy bed, and go thy way into thine house. And immediately he arose, took up the bed, and went forth before them all; insomuch that they were all amazed, and glorified God, saying, We never saw it on this fashion."²

"Hearken unto me . . . : I am the first, I also am the last. Mine hand also hath laid the foundation of the earth, and my right hand hath spanned the heavens; when I call unto them, they stand up together." "Thus saith the Lord, thy Redeemer, the Holy One of Israel; I am the Lord thy God which teacheth thee to profit, which leadeth thee by the way that thou shouldest go. O that thou hadst hearkened to my commandments! then had thy peace been as a river, and thy righteousness as the waves of the sea."³

The same Book that describes God's power, both in creating the earth, the new spiritual heart, and the new physical heart, tells of Satan's oppressive power.

In fact, it sets off Christ's love as manifested against Satan's afflictions of men. Of Jesus, the apostle Peter, who witnessed His mighty miracles nearly two thousand years ago, stated: "How God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Ghost and with power: who went about doing good, and healing all that were *oppressed of the devil*: for God was with him."⁴

Let this settle it forever in the minds of everyone. The leper was *oppressed of the devil*. The paralytic was *oppressed of the devil*. Peter, the fisherman who confessed his sinfulness, was *oppressed by the devil*. And Levi Matthew, the despised publican, collaborator with the enemies of his own nation, carried on his evil business because his heart and soul, his being, were *oppressed of the devil*. The man with the atrophied hand, the blind man, and the demoniac were all *oppressed of the devil*.

Then Jesus came "saying, I will declare thy name unto my brethren, in the midst of the church will I sing praise unto thee." "Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same: that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; and deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage."⁵

In this connection let us not forget that in the closing days miracles also will be used by Satan. The Holy Word declares: "He doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth in the sight of men, and deceiveth them that dwell on the earth by the means of those miracles."⁶

Fire coming down from heaven, in the days of Elijah, was the sign of the true God. But God's Word declares that it will not be the sign in the closing events of human history.

To be able to distinguish between the true miracles and the false, one must have already fallen in love with the truth. Only a firm reliance on the Word of God will protect men in the closing days when "that Wicked shall be revealed . . . : even him, whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and *lying* wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."⁷

To be safe, both now and then, let us claim His wonderful promise: "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them."⁸

The divine philosophy of the Lord's holy day is that the Lord of the Lord's day makes both new physical hearts and new spiritual hearts. It is one thing to believe He has made the world; it is another to believe that He actually here and now makes in me, an unworthy slave of sin, a new creature in Christ Jesus. To truly accept the Scriptural philosophy of our Lord's day is to ask, believe, and claim that new heart today—right now.

It is not necessary for us to know how our Creator and Redeemer accomplishes the work of the new creation. Ours is but to believe with the simple faith of a little child, for "he that believeth not God hath made him a liar."⁹ So let us only believe. Believe in Him with all our hearts. Let us call upon Him in simple, childlike faith.

"O Lord our Lord, how excellent is thy name in all the earth!" "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which

thou hast ordained: what is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?"¹⁰

"All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field."
"The grass withereth, the flower fadeth: but the word of our God shall stand for ever."¹¹

Reflections: For your prayer circle, or personal meditations, we suggest that as you review the seven great Bible facts you actually open the Bible and read the scriptures cited. Then reconstruct the story of this chapter.

CREATION

The Christ is man's Creator,
Than He there is none greater;
He is my Lord,
He is my new heart Maker;
He'll never prove a traitor;
He keeps His word.

To publish His salvation,
To share this revelation,
Is joy divine,
Not worthy our receiving,
But simply by believing,
His pow'r is mine.

In reviewing this story we give seven great Bible facts:

1. Our Lord promises, "A new heart also will I give you" (Ezekiel 36:26).
2. We have proof of His ability to do this, for "the world was made by him" (John 1:10).
3. His creative power was demonstrated in the resurrection of Lazarus when "he cried with a loud voice, Lazarus, come forth. And he that was dead came forth" (John 11:43, 44).
4. Our Lord's creative power will one day be manifested when "all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth" (John 5:28, 29).
5. Since God "made the world and all things therein," "he giveth to all life, and breath, and all things" (Acts 17:24, 25).
6. The basis of our "redemption through his blood" is that "by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth" (Colossians 1:14, 16).

7. He can change our vile bodies "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye"
(1 Corinthians 15:52; Philippians 3:21).

References

1. See Ezekiel 36:26, 27;
Psalm 51:10;
2 Corinthians 5:17.
2. Mark 2:9-12.
3. Isaiah 48:12, 13, 17, 18.
4. Acts 10:38.
5. Hebrews 2:12, 14, 15.
6. Revelation 13:13, 14.
7. 2 Thessalonians 2:8-12.
8. Ezekiel 36:26, 27.
9. 1 John 5:10.
10. Psalm 8:1, 3, 4.
11. Isaiah 40:6, 8.

3

Soap Operas Down the Drain

May Hall becomes the object of a spiritual creation.

May Hall was a wife and mother of five children. The eldest, Mary, was seventeen. May had been a member of the Sabbath-keeping church for twenty-five years. But the last nineteen of these had been hectic.

She knew the "dos and don'ts." But she did not know the Lord, whom to know "is life eternal." She knew each week when the Sabbath began and when its sacred hours closed. But she did not have a sacred relation with her Lord. She knew the "letter" of the law that "killeth" but she did not know the "spirit" of the law that "giveth life." She did not understand the "philosophy of the Lord's day."

Early in life, May had been told what to read and what not to read. Yet she snatched books, magazines, and papers which were on the censored list. The more she read the more she was "taken." Stories of murder, divorce, theft, unwed mothers—all intrigued her, captured her imagination, and hypnotized her spirit.

She was told one day that the reading of this kind of literature destroys one's appreciation for an enjoyment of the things of God. And that bothered her. But not too much, for she was not really interested in trying to love God anyway. He

was not real to her. She did not know that she could have a satisfying love experience with Jesus. Not merely as a trusted friend, but as a blessed Saviour.

As May grew older, she became involved in teaching in the children's division of the Sabbath School. It brought a kind of calm to her soul. But with it came a sense of guilt. Here she was professing Christianity but not living up to its principles.

As the years went by, May found herself sensing a responsibility to her growing family. After all, her innocent children deserved a better example than she was giving them.

Occasionally she attended revival services and found a growing desire to change her life. In fact, many times she went forward in response to altar calls in an endeavor to reform, and a temporary peace seemed to come into her heart. But without a love for the Word of God this experience was short-lived.

May's husband, Jack, was not a professing Christian. He loved his wife and children. But he realized that May's religious experience left much to be desired. He had learned from his own mother all of May's teen-age follies. He knew that she did not have a practical working relationship with the Lord Jesus.

Again and again, as the years came and went, May made a "decision" during special revival meetings. But each time, as the emotion died away, she sank deeper into her obsession for reading lurid magazines and watching TV soap operas.

Finally she decided she would make a firm break with the TV soap serials. It was then that she awakened to the fact that she was a slave to the TV and the magazines.

She found herself actually hurrying to get her morning work done so she could sit and watch another show. "I was even rude to people who interrupted my viewing of these things," she told me.

"It is bad enough," May thought to herself, "to have the Holy Spirit condemn me for my unworthy life. But to have my mother-in-law tell my husband and my children the mistakes of my teen-age years, on up to the present, is too much."

Her mother-in-law not only shared May's mistakes and weaknesses with others, she gossiped about mistakes that *any* of her in-laws made. She was expert at this. Had it not been that Jack understood his mother's exaggerating tongue he might have divorced May.

One summer when Mary, May's teen-age daughter, returned from an extended vacation at her grandmother's place, she was in tears. To have Grandmother glibly gossip about her own mother distressed her. As she shared with her mother some of the tidbits, both mother and daughter wept.

"She was not satisfied to tell what was true about me," May exclaimed. "She added many things that were false."

Her bitterness became deep and deadly. But the more she hated the worse she suffered.

By this time May found herself spending four and five hours a day on TV and cheap reading. Every time she vowed to break these habits she discovered she was held in tighter bondage. She had no power to overcome that burning hatred for her mother-in-law.

Her trauma of heart is described in Holy Scripture: "For that which I do I allow not; for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I."¹

One Sabbath her pastor preached a sermon that struck home to May's heart. It was entitled "People Read Our Lives." Of course the point was brought out, "What are they reading when they see you?"

May decided that she could no longer live a false life. She had just been elected to an office in the children's department of the Sabbath School. So she used as an excuse for resigning that she found it difficult to persuade her husband Jack to come to Sabbath School and church unless they sat together. That was a plausible excuse, and no one seemed to challenge it.

Instead of May's coming more often with her husband, she now scarcely showed up anymore in church. Her excuse was that she was overworking as secretary in the high school where she was employed. But the facts were that she attended all kinds of social functions elsewhere whenever the opportunity afforded.

But the real crisis came when her seventeen-year-old daughter, Mary, returned from summer vacation at the grandmother's home as already mentioned. Everything had piled up. Now May found herself crying for hours every day. Her depressions were more and more intense. Finally she decided that she must either see a psychiatrist or commit herself to a mental institution.

While she was crying her heart out and considering what to do, the pastor called at her home. Before he left, May said later, "He had wormed everything out." She told all.

"He did not give me any advice," May told us. "He went outdoors to his car, picked up a book entitled, *The ABC's of Bible Prayer*, and brought it in. He said it had proved a blessing to many people. Others had felt that it contained answers to their problems. Then he suggested, 'Would you like to read it and tell me what you think of it?'"

May thanked the pastor, and after prayer he left. May picked up the book, read a few sentences, and put it down. "I was too absorbed with my own problems," she said later. "I let it lie on the table for a day or two. Then I picked it up and started to read." May was thinking of the pastor's statement that it contained answers to other people's problems.

"Problems! If it could solve just one problem, I would be delighted." This

time she decided she would devote full attention to what she read in the book.

"I read only a chapter or a chapter and a half," May remarked. "And I said to myself, If that man can get answers like that, I can too." She decided, "I am going to put into practice the instruction it offers." She opened her Bible and put her finger right on a promise. Then she actually asked God to do what He has promised. Jesus commanded us to ask (Matthew 7:7). He also instructed us to believe (Mark 11:24). And He Himself set us the example of claiming by thanking God that He had the answer (John 11:41). The ABC's of this kind of prayer are summed up in one verse of Scripture. "All things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive" (Matthew 21:22).

"I had never before in all my life offered this kind of prayer," May reported. "Every time before when I prayed I doubted that I would get answers. So I didn't. This time I opened my Bible to Isaiah 1:18 'Come now, and let us reason together, saith the Lord: though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow: though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool.' I asked God to forgive my crimson past and do what He promised—make it white as snow."

"This time I bent my whole mind to believing. I determined not to permit one thought of doubt to enter my mind. When I was through with that prayer, I sensed that my past was all taken care of and that my prayer was answered. I had never had this experience before!"

"Then I bowed before my Lord again and opened my Bible to Matthew 21:22. I asked Him to deliver me completely from the prison house of TV soap operas and unworthy reading matter. I had tried hundreds of times, it seems, to quit. But it was impossible. Now I asked, I believed, I claimed that I had received deliverance from all this trash."

"A little later I awakened as from a dream. I realized that I had no desire to watch or read this kind of story."

"I then became concerned. What would I do with those five hours a day I had spent on these things! It was a vacuum. Once again I fell on my knees and used the ABC's of prayer asking, believing, claiming the same promise. 'And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive.'"²

"A little later I discovered that God had changed me completely. I was ravenously hungry for spiritual books to read. I read everything you have written. I asked the pastor's wife for anything she had to offer in the area of spiritual things. I literally devoured every book she lent me. God had dramatically switched my mind from one channel to another."

"The pastor lent me the book on a Thursday. The next Wednesday he was at my home. He told me he was hoping to find someone who had an outstanding experience of answered prayer. Timidly I replied, 'I have.' The pastor almost fell on the floor."

"Then I told him what happened in my life.

"God had answered so wonderfully that I now told the Lord of my feelings toward my mother-in-law.

"I opened my Bible to the promise of Ezekiel 36:26: 'A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh.'

"This promise and the one in Matthew 21:22 I claimed in faith. And while this disease of bitterness was deep and cancerous, yet I discovered that God was removing that heart of stone. The hard feelings were melting away.

"I had really been opening my heart to the Spirit of Jesus. Now I no longer hate my mother-in-law. She was, in fact, the only person on earth that I had hated."

May had known of the "sign" of the holy life, namely, the Lord's holy day.³ But that for which the sign stands—the miracle-working, heart-changing, redeeming power of her Creator—she had not known by personal experience.

Now all was changed. She was a new creature in Christ Jesus, for "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature."⁴ May's heart was new. Her motives were new. Her thoughts were new. Her purposes in life were new. God had made all things in her life new. For her to live was Christ.⁵

Now the same power that had changed her life was to work in her "both to will and to do"⁶ as she began to reach out for the salvation of her family.

Jesus has promised, "If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you."⁷

May had learned the simple ABC formula: "If ye have faith, and doubt not, . . . ye shall say unto this mountain, Be thou removed, and be thou cast into the sea: it shall be done."⁸ And she had the assurance of salvation for her children—also for her husband and her friends.

May's fifteen-year-old Jimmy could not be persuaded to attend any high school functions on the holy worship day. Yet Jimmy was as ignorant of the power of the Lord for which the day stands as his mother had been.

Yet within ten days from the time May experienced that dramatic change of heart Jimmy requested to be in the baptismal class. And before a month had passed he was baptized "in the likeness of his death" with the divine promise that he should now be "also in the likeness of his resurrection."⁹ "Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life."⁹

Jimmy had now found the God of two beautiful memorials. One—the Lord's holy day, in commemoration of the creative power of God.¹⁰ The other—baptism, the memorial of Christ's glorious resurrection. "The like figure where-

unto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ."¹¹ If the Spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ from the dead shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his Spirit that dwelleth in you."¹²

The miracles of answered prayer that May experienced from that day onward would fill pages.

We conversed with May for several hours. The joy which registered on her face testified to the reality of the change of heart she had experienced. To her was fulfilled the experience related by the prophet of old. He cried out in holy glee, "Thy words were found, and I did eat them; and thy word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of mine heart: for I am called by thy name, O Lord God of hosts."¹³

And when May's husband Jack watched to see her backslide again, he was amazed to discover that the experience this time was for real.

With the psalmist she could exclaim, "Concerning the works of men, by the word of thy lips I have kept me from the paths of the destroyer."¹⁴

May had now begun to learn the true philosophy of the Lord of the Lord's day. She was no longer in the class of the religionists of Christ's day who knew not the significance of the Scriptures or the power of God.¹⁵ Now May's belief took on meaning.

As we looked into May's face, there was a glory, a delight, that we cannot describe. Oh, what a change from abstract theory to a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

May had heard and read the scripture containing the first angel's message of Revelation 14:6, 7.

She had accepted the fact that this message was prophesied to be given to the world just prior to the return of our Lord. She had even heard this message spelled out in sermons preached during various evangelistic campaigns. But the philosophy, the real significance, had not become personal to her.

For God to herald a special message to the world just before the return of our Lord, merits careful study, prayerful consideration. And the One whom that message commands earth's people to worship should be given more than passing thought. Of all the pictures of our Lord in the Bible it is noteworthy to which one this message calls attention in "the everlasting gospel."

Among the greatest events of earth's history up to the present is the birth of our Lord. The angels heralded the "glad tidings" to the humble shepherds on the hills of Bethlehem.

The death, burial, and resurrection of our Lord form the very heart of the gospel.¹⁶ "We were reconciled to God by the death of his Son, much more, being

reconciled, we shall be saved by his life."¹⁷ "If Christ be not raised, your faith is vain; ye are yet in your sins."¹⁸

As glorious as are the events of His birth, His death, and His resurrection, the prophecy of the special message of God to the last generation of men and women does not allude to any of these specifically as the *basis* of worship. Instead it singles out God as Creator. "Worship him," it commands, "that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters."¹⁹

Is this great and solemn message intended to belittle such glorious events as our Lord's birth, His death, and His resurrection? Far from it. Rather, it calls attention to the very basis on which all of these great events rest. Were the Godhead not Creator, our Lord could never have been born into our world without a human father. The angel who appeared to Mary explained, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God."²⁰ The expression, "the power of the highest," is the power of the Creator. "Thus shall ye say unto them, The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens. He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heavens by his discretion."²¹

Every miracle in the life and ministry of Christ has for its basis His creative power. It is because the One who made the world was in their midst that He could make the water into wine. It was because He was God that He could forgive sins. It was because He was God that He could declare, "I have power to lay it [my life] down, and I have power to take it again."²² And because He is Creator, He could and did create in May a new heart. So May could give to her family the invitation: "Come, let us worship and bow down: let us kneel before the Lord our maker."²³

Before her change of heart May was in the class described as follows: Thou "forgettest the Lord thy maker, that hath stretched forth the heavens, and laid the foundations of the earth."²⁴ "Of that Rock that begat thee thou art unmindful, and hast forgotten God that formed thee."²⁵

But as we sat and observed May's sparkling eyes, her rejoicing voice, and her beaming face, we knew the change was real.

She was now in love with Jesus Christ, the "Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last."²⁶

Miracles took place repeatedly. Answers filled her with delight. She had asked for a new heart. She had received a new life. Now her joy was full, and she wanted to share it with everyone.

Dear reader, you too can experience what May did. It may not be as dramatic, but it can be as real. In fact, the cure for her hatred of her mother-in-law was not

sudden like the change that took place in her obsession for TV and reading. It was a growth.

Also accept this caution: We cannot *keep* the new heart experience except through a *daily* death to sin and a daily rebirth. Scripture testifies to this.²⁷ Multitudes of victorious children of God can say, Amen. Just as an electric cord has power only as it is connected to power, so humanity has divine power only so long as it is connected to Christ.

Yet to take a quiet hour daily with the Master is not arduous. It is not a yoke. It brings a peace which is rewarding. It assures, when combined with a daily witnessing program, fullness of joy; not necessarily ecstatic but always soul-satisfying.

We recommend that this hour with the Lord be one of faith, firm and sincere. If agony is necessary to overcome the flimsy feelings that Satan uses to becloud the belief in the Lord Jesus Christ, cry out, "Dear Lord, You have promised me 'Ye shall seek me, and find me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart.'²⁸ Lord I believe You are fulfilling Your promise of Philippians 2:13 right now, to work in me 'both to will and to do of . . . [Your] good pleasure.' And now I thank You that I have received in Jesus' name. Amen.

Reflection: We suggest that in your prayer circle, or personal meditation, you review the seven great Bible facts, turning to the Bible texts and reading them prayerfully. Then try to reconstruct the story. (The prayer circle format is presented at the beginning of this book.) In concluding this story we present seven great Bible facts:

1. It is "life eternal" to know "the only true God, and Jesus Christ," whom He "hast sent" (John 17:3).
2. Our Lord states that the purpose of the worship day is that men might experience a very personal relationship with Him; that is "that ye might know that I am the Lord *your* God" (Ezekiel 20:20).
3. As we observe God's worship day, He wants us to know His power to sanctify or make us holy (Ezekiel 20:12).
4. God has given us the record of how He took the helpless and humble "dust of the ground" and "created man in his own image" (Genesis 2:7; 1:27).
5. Today, "dust-and-ashes" humanity cries, "I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do I allow not: for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I" (Romans 7:14, 15).
6. The answer to man's cry for help is found in these words of Scripture: "Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature" (2 Corinthians 5:17).
7. It is "not of works, lest any man should boast." "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God. . . . For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works" (Ephesians 2:8-10).

References:

1. Romans 7:15.
2. Matthew 21:22.
3. See Ezekiel 20:12; Exodus 31:17.
4. 2 Corinthians 5:17.
5. See Philippians 1:21.
6. Philippians 2:13.
7. John 15:7.
8. Matthew 21:21.
9. Romans 6:5, 4.
10. See Exodus 20:8-11.
11. 1 Peter 3:21.
12. Romans 8:11.
13. Jeremiah 15:16.
14. Psalm 17:4.
15. See Mark 11:24.
16. See 1 Corinthians 15:1-4.
17. Romans 5:10.
18. 1 Corinthians 15:17.
19. Revelation 14:7.
20. Luke 1:35.
21. Jeremiah 10:11, 12.
22. John 10:18.
23. Psalm 95:6.
24. Isaiah 51:13.
25. Deuteronomy 32:18.
26. Revelation 22:13.
27. See 1 Corinthians 15:31; Philippians 1:21.
28. Jeremiah 29:13

4 See! There's the Answer!

Childlike trust opens the heart to a display of the Creator's power.

Amy Lower attended some of our meetings held in her city. She had had a rather difficult experience up to that time. She imagined people were persecuting her when they were not. Then she found a new way of life. It revealed itself in a new attitude, for example, toward an ill-dispositioned deacon, Mr. Crutch.

Mr. Crutch never spoke to her in church, and Amy was hurt by this attitude. She found herself looking for pity for the way he treated her. Then one day she thought to herself, "I see Mr. Crutch as a noble soul. Perhaps he's gloomy and unfriendly because of some unfortunate experience he has had. What he actually needs is someone to show him love and kindness."

So Amy prayed to the Lord that He would fill her heart with Christian love for Mr. Crutch. She believed that God would fulfill her prayer. She claimed the answer and returned thanks that God had done what He had promised.

The next Sabbath morning as Amy entered, she saw Mr. Crutch on the other side of the church. She eagerly stepped to his side and shook his hand warmly. "Mr. Crutch was instantly a different man," she said later. He was the man I had pictured in my prayer. God made him what I had envisioned him to be."

Dr. Lessel, a dear friend of mine, was most helpful to me years before when I

was passing through a personal struggle. Dr. Lessel gave me a formula for creative praying. I have long since forgotten the exact words he used, but he challenged me to visualize in my mind's eye the very thing taking place for which I was praying. When I have done this through the years, I want to testify that it really works! This is the vital part of the true philosophy of the Lord's day. It points to Him who creates answers that appear impossible. Dr. Lessel was speaking of answers in the spiritual realm, not of selfish petitions that minister to vanity.¹

But it is not an easy exercise. It requires faith. We must find higher horizons of thought, of prayer, and of practice if we are to be in character like our Creator. At the beginning of history He looked out upon a world "without form, and void" and visualized light. When He commanded light to appear, it came—the expression of His thoughts.

Centuries passed. Then the Creator came to this earth as a man. He walked into a synagogue one Sabbath morning to worship. A worshipper was sitting there that day who had an "unclean spirit." That morning, during the service, Jesus Christ saw that man as he would become. He spoke the word and cast the unclean spirit out of this man, and the cleansed man was free, happy, and well. His life had been empty, unproductive, and sinful; but the creative power of God came that Sabbath morning and changed his outlook—and his life!

Christ has always been a visualizing builder. He will always be. "He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not."² Yes, the Creator of heaven and earth tabernacled in lowly humanity, building men, building hope, and bringing happiness, because He saw men not merely as they were—He saw them as they could become through His creative power.

On another Sabbath, Jesus entered another synagogue. There sat a man with a withered hand. Our Lord, seeing this man's condition, healed him instantly. Another body was built, and with it another life was inspired with hope. This same God awaits to do the identical thing for those of us who need healing of spirit, not healing of the body.

On still another Sabbath day our Lord saw a man who was blind from birth. He gave him sight! The blind man saw; he rejoiced; he leaped for joy! Another life rebuilt by Him of whom the Word speaks when it says that by Him God made the worlds.³

What a wonderful builder! His whole life was a continual prayer—fulfilled—because He saw it as fulfilled before it happened. He saw men as they might become, and He made them all to be what He visualized them to be if they would but take hold of His almighty power by creative faith.

One day our Lord was standing by the grave of His close and trusted friend Lazarus. He cried out, "Father, I thank thee that thou *hast* heard me. And I

knew that thou hearest me always; but because of the people which stand by I said it, that they may believe that thou *hast* sent me."⁴

To tell the God in heaven that He always hears us is creative praying; and it makes the whole life blossom in good deeds to build other lives.

This same wonderful Lord finally laid down His own life for you and me. But never forget that on this earth where He laid it down, He took it again. So the place of our most cruel apparent defeat may be the place of our spiritual resurrection; that is, if we will take the Creator into our thinking, our heart, and our life.

Let us give you another example: I was in need of answered prayer in behalf of a very distraught member of the church who had come to camp meeting. This lady's husband had become very antagonistic toward her. A separation was pending.

We knelt together after reading the promise that God would give His children that for which they prayed. We asked, believed, and claimed the fulfillment of our request. I envisioned the angels flying through the sky in the direction of that godless, rebellious husband. We rose from our knees, and I said, "Now we must believe that God has done for us what we asked. Goodnight and God bless you."

The next day the lady returned with great joy to relate what had happened. "It's the first time in our married life that he has apologized for his behavior. He's changed. I've never known him to be this way before!"

Many of you have probably heard of the ABC's of Bible prayer before reading this book. You will see this method brought to your attention again and again here. This kind of praying is based on claiming Bible promises. Each Bible promise contains something which can be seen only by faith. For example, when Jesus said that the Word of God is seed,⁵ He was drawing upon His book of nature. In every normal apple seed there is actually a tiny, tiny embryo with trunk part, leaf part, and root part. You cannot see this tiny tree with the naked eye. It takes the eye of faith based on a scientific fact. So every promise of the Bible contains the gift promised. I have done something that helps me to believe that Rutherford Platt, the prize-winner in science, was correct when he said that every normal apple seed contains an apple tree. I have cut a wild persimmon seed open slantwise and have seen the tiny persimmon tree embryo there. And what makes it easier for me to pray with creative imagination is that I see the results of that kind of creative praying in the life of my Lord Jesus Christ. When He stood before the grave of Lazarus and said to His Father, "Father, I thank thee that thou *hast* heard me," and followed this prayer with the command, "Lazarus, come forth," I have no difficulty in believing that my Lord actually saw by faith Lazarus rising to life in response to His word.

The same wonderful Lord at the beginning of time looked out on a world that

"was without form, and void." It is not difficult for me to know that when He said, "Let there be light," He knew there would be light.

To know our Lord is to copy Him, imitate Him, study His character, and finally to become like Him. This creative philosophy is relevant to every area of the Christian life.

Take the experience, not of an internationally famous person, but rather of a housewife.

Her name is Dorothy. We met her while we were ministering in California. Dorothy represents one of the so-called "average church members" who, through the Holy Spirit, is living creatively for our Lord. Dorothy's life was changed by the wonder-working power of our Lord.

Dorothy had been an agnostic. Her husband Roy, an atheist, was a most unhappy man. In his desire to find a happy way of life Roy began reading the Bible. In his enthusiasm, he wore out three Bibles in a short period of time.

Dorothy and Roy had an eleven-year-old daughter, Verline, a fourth-grader at the local public school. Dorothy was worried about Verline because as yet she could not read. Depending on her memory, and by looking at the pictures, she was sliding by.

That same year, Dorothy's cousin suggested that Verline change schools. "Why don't you send her to our church school?" suggested the cousin.

After some consideration and discussion, Verline was transferred to the new school. Within a period of one month she was reading. This impressed Dorothy greatly, although the religion of the teachers did not.

"I was wild, and enjoyed myself," confided Dorothy as she briefly sketched her experience in the world.

Roy's sister, a faithful Sabbath keeper, came to live with Roy and Dorothy. Three months later, when she left, she presented them with a gift book entitled *The Great Controversy*.

It was put on the shelf and left there. Soon after this Dorothy took sick. While in bed she began to read the book. She became so engrossed that she read it straight through. Then she read it through the second time. On her third reading she marked the book with a red pencil wherever an important statement was made. Finally Dorothy read it through once more, this time reading the underlined portions.

One week later Dorothy's heart was changed. Immediately she began to share her treasure with her husband, and they were baptized into the Lord Jesus, uniting with the church.

In a few years Dorothy was urged to become a Sabbath School teacher for one of the children's departments. But she was not interested. The reason? She had tried once before with the junior department and once with a young couple. Yes,

she had tried to give Bible studies as well as teach the juniors but had failed both times. She was not about to try again.

But every time Dorothy prayed, she heard a voice in her mind saying, "Go teach!" Dorothy dismissed it each time with the excuse that she just had no talent whatsoever in the field of teaching. Yet every time she read her Bible or knelt to pray, those words returned to her mind, "Go teach, go teach, go teach!"

Finally Dorothy decided that since she had absolutely *no* talent in this field she might better stop praying and reading her Bible. She was afraid, however that this would mean the loss of her soul.

Finally, one day when the words came again, Dorothy replied, "All right, Lord, You win." So it was that in a short time Dorothy began to teach. This time, however, it was under the leadership of a teacher of child psychology.

Within one year Dorothy was helping to teach student teachers in child evangelism, under the guidance of her instructor! Talents came to the surface that Dorothy never dreamed she had. During the following years Dorothy not merely became one of the finest teachers of tiny tots, but also a teacher of teachers. She composed more than forty beautiful songs for these tiny tots plus scores of little poems in connection with her teaching program.

She and her associates have created a small "museum" of many kinds of animals, birds, reptiles, etc., to use in teaching the children during the Sabbath School hour every Sabbath day.

In my years in the ministry I have yet to see anything to compare with Dorothy's Sabbath School "museum." It all came from one who had "no talent for teaching." No, excuse me, it came from God. Stuffed animals are part of the "museum." Cutouts, pictures, etc., are carefully cataloged and indexed for future use. When the Sabbath morning arrives, every table has been prepared with the thought, skill, and love one would find in those preparing for royalty. After all, the royal King of the universe is there!

Many kinds of nature and home arrangements are placed before the tiny tots week by week. God's out-of-doors combines with the beauty of obedience to create the most friendly atmosphere of worship, study, and joy!

Among other things we saw in Dorothy's "museum" was a whole set of tails of various animals. Dorothy had found a little book which teaches the wisdom and discretion of our Lord. It is illustrated by a chart of tails. There is the monkey. What could he do had he received a peacock's tail? He needed the one given him by his Creator so he could swing from the limbs in the forest. And what good would a skunk's tail be to a fish? The fish could not swim with a skunk's tail! It could be of no possible use to him. Isn't it wonderful how creation points to a Creator—how He outfitted each of His creatures with just the equipment it needs? Talk about the power, the wisdom, and the discretion of our Maker! The

philosophy of the Lord's holy day leads us to laud our Creator for His wisdom, discretion, and power, and to partake of His creative Spirit.

Dorothy has several ladies assisting her. She gives credit first to the Lord for the success that has attended her. Then she gives sincere credit to her associates for the creative help they have been. There is a "second blessing" that these ladies have found in their work in the Sabbath School: They are so busy being creative, preparing the material for these children, that they have no time to gossip, criticize, or find fault. How wonderful it is to be used by God—transformed into a useful vessel, the result of the power of heaven making us His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works.

This fits into the philosophy of creative Sabbath keeping. Dorothy thought she could not teach. She is now a teacher of teachers. She didn't think she had any talent as a poet or musician. Yet she has written many poems and composed scores of songs.

The same Creator who helped little Verline to read in a single month has taught her mother to do the things she thought were absolutely impossible.

After becoming a Christian and raising her first children, Dorothy wanted another child. The atmosphere in which her first children were reared was that of atheism, agnosticism, and skepticism. Now she wanted a child reared in the atmosphere of a Christian home. "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth," rang through Dorothy's mind. How she wanted that next child! But it seemed that she could not have another baby, so she began to pray as did Hanna, Samuel's mother. God graciously answered Dorothy's prayer and gave her a sweet little girl they called Millie. God creates new physical hearts, new spiritual hearts, and even gives us babies when it is humanly impossible! The Lord's day, properly understood, points to this Creator! It tells us that He is relevant in every area of life.

Reflection: Dear Reader: You can start a prayer group. Begin with one prayer partner. Then expand to five or six in number. Whether in a group or alone, we suggest you try heaven-oriented imagination in prayer. As you claim the promises of 1 John 1:9 and 1 John 2:25, you will ask believingly for forgiveness, cleansing of all past transgressions, and actually visualize yourself as receiving eternal life in Jesus Christ now.

As we conclude the stories of this chapter, let us study seven great Bible facts:

1. Our Lord declares His word to be "seed" (Luke 8:11).

Note. —Could we look within an apple seed, we should see a tiny tree embryo with trunk part, two leaf parts, and root part.

2. When we claim a Bible promise for wisdom, "Christ . . . is made unto us wisdom" (James 1:5; 1 Corinthians 1:30).

3. "God . . . calleth those things which be not as though they were"; for He "spake, and it was done" (Romans 4:17; Psalm 33:9).

4. When Christ by faith called, "Lazarus, come forth" (John 11:43), He saw Him coming out of the grave, for He said, "Father, I thank thee that thou *hast* heard me" (John 11:41).

5. We too can visualize a tempted, tried member of Christ's body actually receiving life, for Jesus has promised, "He shall give him life" (1 John 5:16).

6. This heaven-oriented imagination, called faith, is commanded by our Lord who says, "Believe that ye receive . . . and ye shall have" (Mark 11:24).

7. Our Lord, being infinite, promises that often our prayers will be answered in a way we least expect, for He says it will be in a way that "thou knowest not" (Jeremiah 33:3).

References:

1. See James 4:1-3.
2. John 1:10.
3. See Hebrews 1:1-3.
4. John 11:41, 42.
5. See Luke 8:11.
6. Genesis 1:2, 3.
7. Ecclesiastes 12:1.
8. See 1 Samuel 1.

5 Princess With Prism Vision

He who made something "very good" out of something "without form, and void" will also make something very good out of you!

"Would you please come over to the Hy-Pana House and speak to our family?" asked Chaplain Hamilton. I agreed to go over the following Sunday morning. But down in my heart I dreaded the added assignment.

Not that I did not want to speak to the few, but that our program was heavy. I was weary from the long hours of counseling that often extended into the night.

On my way over to the home that morning I experienced difficulty in finding my way. By the time I entered the chapel where Chaplain Hamilton was already opening the worship, I was weary from frustrated haste, yet I was delighted that I had not missed out on the promised appointment altogether.

Chaplain Hamilton's introduction was unique. It went something like this:

"Dear people, I have an apology to make. I have felt that ministers are not interested in speaking to the small group. In fact, I ventilated my opinion on this. And some of you heard me. But this morning I want to apologize. Pastor Coon has proved to me that this is not true. He is here, and we are happy to have him speak to us."

As I stood to speak, my eyes glanced over the group of patients. I saw a lady on a specially made hospital bed. She was a helpless invalid. But her smile was

infectious. After the worship was over and I shook hands with those close about me, I stepped over to the side of the invalid, Lydia M. Halter.

Lydia was a helpless cripple, fitted with prism glasses so she could read. Following is a letter that she wrote quite legibly with a pen forced into her crippled hand. It indicates that she has also written twenty-three notebooks by the same method.

"TRUST IN HIM"

"Trust in the Lord with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths."

"These words came to me so very clearly one night that I was awakened out of a sound sleep. It seemed like they were spoken to me almost audibly.

"I closed my eyes and tried to go back to sleep again, but to no avail; for these words kept ringing in my ears and left me wondering just what significance they had.

"A few days earlier I had been to the doctor and was told that I had arthritis. This was 28 years ago. Little did I know then that before too many years this disease would leave me totally disabled.

"Gradually the pain in my hands grew worse, until I had to give up my typing lessons, and shortly thereafter I was forced to give up teaching my piano students. Little by little all the many plans I had made for the future came to naught. It was a time of discouragement, to say the least.

"My first thoughts were why did this have to happen to me? Could God really love me and yet permit such an illness as this to come upon me? Yes, these thoughts kept going through my mind until my doubt grew stronger and my faith failed. Satan always waits to attack us when we feel at our lowest ebb. He who causes all diseases would have us believe that God does not love us. He knew that if he could get me to doubt God's love, he could block God's every effort to help me.

"It was during this time of awful discouragement that I turned to God in prayer. I prayed for hours, until finally I fell asleep.

"God knew that I needed Him that night, for it was during that very night that I heard His voice speaking so clearly to me telling me to put my trust in Him. He saw too, what lay ahead for me, and this was His way of telling me not to lose confidence in Him.

"Gradually the arthritis left its crippling effects, until it left me completely bedfast and helpless.

"Now it seemed that there was nothing left to do—nothing to live for. I couldn't use my eyes because they would go out of focus when I tried to read.

The optometrist fitted me with prism glasses so that I could see my books without the use of a pillow. Then they put up a reading tray to hold my books. I began to study in earnest, but all my pages had to be turned by my nurse. Oh, how I prayed to God for the use of just one hand so that I could turn my pages and underline all the wonderful statements I was reading.

"Nothing happened. Several weeks went by before I finally asked someone to put a pencil in my hand. This they did by forcing it into my hand which was closed in a tight fist. Then day after day I struggled to write, and gradually the Lord enabled me to do so.

"One of the most inspiring statements I found in the book *Christ's Object Lessons* which says, 'A character formed according to the divine likeness is the only treasure that we can take from this world to the next.' Now, at last I found something that I could do! For if this was all that I could take from this world to the next, this is what I want, and will surely strive to obtain.

"This statement prompted me to continue studying the spirit of prophecy along with my German and English Bibles, and taking many statements from these wonderful books, until I have completed 23 notebooks.

"Jesus has gone to prepare mansions for those who are preparing themselves, through His love and grace, for the abodes of bliss." — *Testimonies*, vol. 8, p. 140.

"In the human heart He sees more than sin, more than misery. In His infinite love and wisdom He sees man's possibilities, the height to which he may attain." *Testimonies*, vol. 7, p. 269.

"May these few lines be a source of encouragement to others is my prayer. Lydia B. Halter, April 5, 1971."

On the sixth day of Creation week, instead of speaking man into being, God used existing material. "The Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul." Think of God's using the humble dust to create man in His own image! So today God is using existing material, the human body and spirit compounded in the hand of Himself, and is re-creating wonderful lives.

Lydia Halter is only one example. She became almost completely helpless physically. Yet under the power of a faithful Creator she is not merely a strong vibrant soul, but is able to write legible lines. It was difficult for me to comprehend how an invalid in her condition could so much as write anything—much less in a legible hand.

"God is no respecter of persons."² What He has done for Lydia Halter He is doing in thousands of lives all over the earth. But to experience God's transforming power man must feel his need of this rebuilding of his life, whether mental, spiritual, or physical.

Isn't it a travesty that while invalids like Lydia are happy in the Lord, countless thousands of others who are physically normal go around whining, pleading for more attention, and complaining at their lot in life? Would it not be well for us all to cry out to the Lord, our Maker, to fulfill His promise, "I will build them."³ God will take us just as we are and make us into beautiful, outgoing personalities regardless of what we are now, if we will but let Him. In the beginning when God made man, man had no choice as to whether or not he wished to be made from the humble dust. But today we who have the mental capacity to choose can give Him our will. If our will is weak, then in answer to the most humble believing prayer He will fulfill this scriptural promise: "For it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."⁴

When I was pastor of a college church many years ago, I audited a class in chemistry. One day the professor gave us a picture of how sodium—just a tiny chunk—can be a violent boiling thing in a liquid. It reminded me of a hot-tempered, obnoxious "Christian." At another time the professor was telling of the lethal nature of chlorine. He said a tank springing a leak of this deadly substance could empty a town. We learned that ordinary table salt is made up of these two deadly elements. I thought to myself, God has put the two together, sodium and chlorine, and made them into "the salt of the earth."

I wondered to myself that perhaps all the giants of faith mentioned in Hebrews II became useful and good because God took the existing inferior material and made it into something very useful—"the salt of the earth." We should gladly allow God to take over our unworthy, obnoxious, fuming, complaining, deadly lives and make us into "the salt of the earth." This is the building Christ. This is He for whom the holy day stands. Should not observers of that day be the most positive, the most constructive, the most success-oriented of any people on the face of the earth?

Are you asking, "How can I, too, be a builder of lives?" The answer is, join Christ's building crew! We cannot be true builders unless we unite our lives to that of Christ. He has declared, "Without me ye can do nothing."⁵ The psalmist has put it this way, "Except the Lord build the house, they labour in vain that build it."⁶

"It is not the capabilities you now possess or ever will have that will give you success. It is that which the Lord can do for you."⁷

When the creature unites his weakness to the Creator's strength, his ignorance to Christ's wisdom, his sinfulness to God's purity, and his unworthiness to His matchless grace, then "we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works."⁸

Then we are "workers together with him."⁹ We have become members of His building crew only through His infinite grace. "For by grace are ye saved

through faith; and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God; not of works, lest any man should boast."¹⁰

When God looked at our lives—"without form, and void"—He did not cast us off, but declared, "I will build them, and not pull them down; and I will plant them, and not pluck them up."¹¹

Lydia Halter is just one of the common people, almost unknown, who has been re-created in mind and spirit though physically helpless.

Let me share with you now an account of Pastor Frank Smathers, a minister who was physically normal, but whose spirit and character were negative.

Frank had grown up a critical, domineering youth. Determined as a mule and egotistical as a peacock, Frank went through college, married, and somehow got into the ministry.

As the years passed, the officers of the conference observed that Frank was not equipped to be a builder of lives. His sermons were negative, his attitude bad. Even his facial expression was sadly pessimistic.

The president of the conference finally called his committee together. They counseled together regarding Frank's utter lack of fitness for the great work of preaching the gospel—the good news. To most people, just to see him coming down the street was bad news, to say nothing about the effect when he opened his mouth!

After the committee meeting, a letter was dictated and sent to Frank, informing him that on such and such a date his work for the conference would terminate. There are times when a minister is moved from a church, only to result in strong reactions from church people who have been blessed by his ministry of the Word of God. But so far as we know, there was not so much as a ripple when Frank announced to his congregation that he would soon be leaving them.

Frank and his wife decided to relocate in California. He would return to college, take a medical course, and become a physician.

While Frank and his wife Sybil were taking a little rest before beginning his medical training, they heard of our series of meetings. It was to be conducted within a few blocks of the apartment where they were staying.

Still full of bitterness Frank and Sybil nevertheless began attending our meetings. One of the topics had to do with the "Lovely Lord of the Lord's Day." We endeavored by the Lord's help to present the creative power of our Lord. He is a builder of lives. He constructs homes. He brings gladness where before there was only sadness, guilt, and bickering.

As Frank and Sybil attended night after night, the Holy Spirit spoke to Frank's heart. Frank saw himself for what he was—at least to a small degree. Had he fully understood himself, surely he would have become discouraged. How good

the Lord is to us not to reveal all our faults to us at once—lest we be crushed!

As Frank listened to the voice of the One who in the beginning declared, "Let us make man in our image,"¹² that creative Spirit of our Lord began His work in his heart and that of his companion.

Just across the alley from where Frank and Sybil were staying was a young couple just married one month. Already their home was on the skids. They were contemplating divorce!

One day Frank suggested to Sybil, "Why don't we ask the Lord to help us to become channels to build this new home?" This would fit what they had been hearing about the building Christ who not merely created the world but made man in His likeness.

Using some simple excuse to visit their friends, John and Judy, they slipped over to their apartment. Soon they were in a real discussion of the problems of the newlyweds. Before a week had passed Frank and Sybil had been used of the Lord to reconcile John and Judy. A few weeks later I flew in to a Southwestern college for a camp-meeting series. One day while there I was standing on the campgrounds near one of the tents and felt a little tap on the back of my right shoulder. Turning around I was pleased to see Frank and a stranger. Frank introduced me to John and said, "John has come to the college here to prepare for the ministry." I could scarcely credit either my eyes or ears.

A year or two later we were called to conduct a series of meetings in New Mexico. By now Frank had received a call back into the ministry and was doing well. He made a trip from his nearby district of churches as often as possible to attend our series entitled, "The Positive Living Clinic." I was delighted to observe his optimistic spirit, his sense of mission to build and rebuild lives and to save souls.

Soon Frank began a series of radio messages. With God's help he built hope in the hopeless. He inspired the doubting with faith. He assured the lonely that Jesus loved and cared. The results were amazing. He soon had more interests from his radio ministry, though a small city station, than he could keep up with.

Frank's ministry moved forward by leaps and bounds. He even began using the ten-point program of joy which we have taught for years. The result: People were delivered from the power of Satan and his evil vices.

We kept in touch with Frank and Sybil. As the years passed, success crowned their efforts until Frank is today considered one of the successful evangelists of our church. He is now laboring with great success in Africa, and God is richly blessing his efforts. Souls are being delivered from the hypnotic power of Satan. Families are being salvaged. Lives are changing—all through the power of the One who has promised, "I will build them, and not pull them down."¹³

Frank had been somewhat like Mr. Hawk, a leading officer of a certain church

where we held meetings. His pastor one day was discussing with Mr. Hawk a beautiful missionary program he had in mind to present to his church. The program by the pastor probably had some weak points in it. But instead of Mr. Hawk's complimenting the pastor for that which was good, Hawk replied, "I'm 'agin' it."

I shuddered. I thought, how much better had Mr. Hawk built his own points upon the pastor's idea. The Bible says, "Overcome evil with good."¹⁴ God wants His children to make the good even better.

In the home the same approach is important. Instead of belittling the remarks of another, let us congratulate one another for the degree of constructiveness offered. And then suggest, "What would you think of this plan also?" By this means we can advance step by step to improve the total scheme of things.

When we think of the dramatic change that the Lord Jesus worked within the former negative, pessimistic, destructive-thinking Frank, we cry out, "Praise God from whom all blessings flow."

But this is the Sabbath-keeping philosophy, "They that shall be of thee shall build"¹⁵ is His promise.

If you, dear one, find you love to wreck others with criticism, gossip, and evil speaking, we invite you to behold our Lord. This Lord of ours is a builder. After He made a world, He built a home for Adam and Eve. And when man sinned, our Lord built man's hope in a coming Redeemer.¹⁶

When the world was about to perish by a flood of waters, our Lord had His servant build a most unusual structure, the ark, to preserve any who chose to be saved.

When after the Flood God called Abraham, He built his descendants into a great nation, beginning when Abraham was almost a hundred years old! God loves to take helpless situations and build them into tremendous successes.

Abraham's great-grandson, Joseph, went into Egypt with what the captors thought was a slave's heart. He walked out of the dungeon with the heart of a prime minister. Who brought about this wonder? The Miracle Worker of the universe!

Moses, after proving to be a failure at conquest and spending four decades out in the deserts of Midian, was built into the world's greatest lawgiver, statesman, and leader of armies. By whose power? That of our Creator, our Maker, our Lord.

David, king of Israel, after committing his scarlet sin, cried out to God, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me."¹⁷ God came and restored David to His fellowship and did not withdraw His promise that He would build his house and kingdom forever.¹⁸ What a God of mercy and grace!

Throughout the ages of Old Testament history God was building homes and lives, and re-creating hearts filled with sin to be turned over to the Lord.

Then Jesus came. "He was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not. He came unto his own, and his own received him not. But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name."¹⁹

Everywhere Jesus went He built lives, uplifted the fallen, brought salvation to the sinful, and breathed hope into discouraged hearts. To the one taken in adultery and condemned by the Pharisees He said, "Neither do I condemn thee," assuring her that she could "go, and sin no more." To Zaccheus, an outcast among his people, Jesus assured, "Today I must abide at thy house." To the rotting leper He spoke with a gentle touch, "Be thou clean."

The last act of Christ's building power was on the cross of Calvary. Hanging next to Him was a ruined life, a wrecked soul, a dying thief. Jesus built into him eternal life right on the spot. Then He dropped His head and died a mighty conqueror over sin and evil—over Satan and all the hosts of hell.

We have the privilege of being workers together with God. From the height of Calvary we seem to hear His cry inviting, "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely."²⁰

Reflection: Whether in a prayer partnership, a prayer group, or alone in your home, we suggest that you review the seven Bible facts of this chapter. Then "fight the good fight of faith" (1 Timothy 6:12) by picturing our Lord as actually doing in your individual life and other lives what He has promised. You will be signally rewarded.

As we conclude this chapter containing experiences of rebuilt attitudes, we present seven important Bible facts:

1. When at the beginning of the world, our Lord said, "Let there be light," He immediately saw light. God knows all and can do anything. Scripture pictures Him as knowing and "declaring the end from the beginning" (Genesis 1:3; Isaiah 46:10).

2. God desires helpless humanity to visualize His promise, "I will build them" as being fulfilled—before we experience it or feel it—for "without faith it is impossible to please him" (Jeremiah 24:6; Hebrews 11:6).

3. God encourages all by faith to see the fulfillment of His building love before they experience it, just as the woman with the issue of blood did when she said, "I shall be whole." Jesus declared, "Thy faith hath made thee whole" (Mark 5:28, 34).

4. Our Lord promises that true Sabbath keepers will "build the old waste places." They will "call the sabbath a delight" and "honour" our Lord (Isaiah 58:12, 13).

5. Our Lord commands us to "speak evil of no man" (Titus 3:2).
6. God commands us to "honour all men" (1 Peter 2:17).
7. God commands us to "restore" a person "overtaken in a fault" (Galatians 6:1).

References:

1. Genesis 2:7.
2. Acts 10:34.
3. Jeremiah 24:6.
4. Philippians 2:13.
5. John 15:5.
6. Psalm 127:1.
7. *Christ's Object Lessons*, p. 146.
8. Ephesians 2:10.
9. 2 Corinthians 6:1.
10. Ephesians 2:8, 9.
11. Jeremiah 24:6.
12. Genesis 1:26.
13. Jeremiah 24:6.
14. Romans 12:21.
15. Isaiah 58:12.
16. See Genesis 3:15.
17. Psalm 51:10.
18. See 2 Samuel 7:16.
19. John 1:10-12.
20. Revelation 22:17.

6 The Gracious Christian

The commandments shed light on being the "light of the world."

A young man, a professed Christian, went into an automobile agency to look at new cars. The owner, a busy man, spent two hours of his valuable time conversing with this young man. All this time the young man was bargaining the owner down in price. When finally it was evident that the owner could not afford to come down further in price, the young man shrugged his shoulders and stated that he could obtain a similar car at fleet price!

Instead of frankly laying the facts before the agency owner in the first place and graciously allowing that he possibly could not meet this price to the purchaser of a single car, the young man took the owner's valuable time. Then by scoffing at him for not finding it appropriate to grant him the fleet price, the young man reflected anything but the principles of true Christianity.

The automobile agency owner was the husband of a fine Christian woman. Later the owner was taken to a Christian hospital for surgery. As he was recovering, a friend went to the administrator of the hospital, a deeply sincere and dedicated businessman, and suggested this would be a good time to invite this automobile owner to unite in fellowship with the church family of which his wife was already a member. He had even accompanied his wife to church and

had seemed to enjoy it services. Warmly the hospital administrator extended an invitation to the fellowship of his wife's church family.

The owner respected the administrator of the hospital who extended the invitation. But he was offended because one person in that church family had come into his establishment and thoughtlessly, selfishly, consumed two hours of his valuable time.

Now, were the agency owner already a Christian, he might have looked beyond the inconsistency of the one church member and thought of all the unselfish and thoughtful members of the church. But evidently he himself had not found a love relationship with Jesus Christ. Had the member of the flock who had been so thoughtless of the businessman studied the generous, unselfish attitude of the Master, he would have approached the owner of the agency in an altogether different attitude. This Christlike attitude could have had an influence on leading the businessman to Christ.

If we have ever unconsciously followed that young man's thoughtlessness in business, let us remember that Jesus said, "Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."¹ This message comes ringing down through the ages. To be a Christian in name only without the holy life is to have the sign but not the substance of the sanctified life.² How the evil one must rejoice when a "Christian" descends to such business methods. Many an unbeliever will stumble over the life of one inconsistent "Christian."

There are tens of thousands of dedicated, unselfish, generous Christians who would revolt at the thoughtless attitude of that young man's taking the time of the businessman and then marching off in a scoffing attitude. Yet how often has one lone professed Christian placed a dark blot on a church full of generous, unselfish children of our Lord.

We have observed a beautiful thoughtfulness on the part of thousands of believers who attend our annual camp meetings. They deeply appreciate the tent or room provided by the ministers who act as servants during that ten-day period. These people stand before the reception desk or the locating booth and are assigned a cabin, a tent, or a room ordered beforehand. Maybe a leg on a table is loose. Perhaps not all in their tent is in the best order, yet they are most patient and understanding. They know that their ministers have left their own churches and have become "errand boys" during the ten-day period. They have labored long and faithfully to have every room and every tent in the best order possible. But since ministers are not always camp specialists, something is often overlooked.

At one of our camp meetings the one in charge of location placed a huge sign up next to the locating booth. He painted in letters a foot high these words of

Scripture, "HERE IS THE PATIENCE OF THE SAINTS." What a commentary on the kindness of those who were so thoughtful—and a hint to the thoughtless, selfish few!

In one church located out in the country where we conducted a series of meetings I decided to publish an apology. On the announcement and invitation to attend our meetings we placed in large print "WE APOLOGIZE." On the brochure we asked the forgiveness of any to whom we had failed to represent the love, the kindness, and the unselfishness of our Lord. Our Lord teaches us that it is not a sign of weakness to apologize. He says, "Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed."³

Instead of this humble attitude having a negative effect it was blessed of God. The promise that "he that humbleth himself shall be exalted"⁴ was fulfilled during that series. Among the guests who attended that series of meetings was a gentleman who had years before been a member of that particular church. But through some misunderstanding he had let his membership lapse. For years he had never entered the door of the church.

At the sight of that announcement, however, he felt impressed to return at least for that one series of meetings. He could not resist responding to that printed apology. Before the week was over he sought for an interview with us. He said that he would like to return to the fold, stating that the beginning of this desire was when he saw that humble apology appearing on the brochure. "I decided to come to the meetings," he said, "and see if you actually meant what you said." And he added, "I request baptism and to be reinstated in the fellowship of the church."

The Lord Jesus made clear that there are tares among the wheat, meaning that there will be unworthy ones in the church. It does not change the fact, however, that the field in which the wheat is growing is God's field. The wheat is still God's wheat. But He makes it clear in this parable that there will always be the insincere and the sincere, the hypocrite and the genuine, the thoughtless and the thoughtful. They will be going to church together.

Some whom we think in our humanness to be tares are only immature wheat. They need to "grow in grace."⁵ Our Lord makes very clear also that no man is to judge which are tares and which are immature wheat. Mistakes and sins are committed. But He said, "Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn." "As therefore the tares are gathered and burned in the fire: so shall it be in the end of this world. The Son of man shall send forth his angels, and they shall gather out of his kingdom all things that offend, and them which do iniquity; and shall cast them into a furnace of fire: there shall be wailing and gnashing of teeth. Then

shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.”⁶

How we wish that every Christian in our fellowship were 100 percent sincere. But the Master informs us that this will never be until the end of the world. Therefore, how important that everyone keep “looking unto Jesus.” God’s promise is, “Look unto me, and be ye saved.”⁷

If someone were to ask, How could a person who deals dishonestly be anything but a tare? let us not forget that even if he is a tare at the moment, there is the possibility of his yet receiving the new birth.

Again if we are led to wonder how slothful business can be engaged in by an apparently sincere person, we think there is an answer. Many individuals who are truly sincere have never been taught the importance of careful business dealing. Some also misunderstand an agreement they have had with another Christian. And when this misunderstanding surfaces, there is a tendency under the stress of emotion for us to believe our brother is not completely honest.

We know of one way by which many misunderstandings between fellow Christians and others can be avoided. It is by having a written agreement.

As we conclude this chapter let us observe the following Bible facts:

1. Christ says to all of His true followers, “Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Matthew 5:16).

2. Wherein Christians have failed so to do we should confess our faults (James 5:16).

3. God wants us to “grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ” (2 Peter 3:18).

4. We are to look, not to the hypocrites in the church, but to Jesus our Saviour (Isaiah 45:22).

5. For those who have failed to do right but who repent, God promises to “cast all their sins into the depths of the sea” (Micah 7:19).

References:

1. Matthew 5:16.
2. See Ezekiel 20:12.
3. James 5:16.
4. 2 Peter 3:18.
5. Luke 14:11.
6. Matthew 13:30; 40-43.
7. Hebrews 12:2; Isaiah 45:22.

7 She Stood the Stink

Unpressuring, winsome Ruth Nyder was rewarded as the Word went to work in the life of her husband, Jack.

Ruth Nyder was a Sabbath keeper. I was her pastor. Every time I saw Ruth, whether in church, at her home, or on the street, she impressed me.

It is not always easy to describe that “something” about a child of God that fills one with admiration; but whatever it is, she had it! It showed in her face. It shone from her eyes. It revealed itself in her pure and careful speech. Even her walk seemed to indicate a quiet power within, controlling her every word and act.

Ruth’s husband, Jack, was different. Jack was not a professed Christian, and his countenance revealed it. His “I-can-make-the-grade-on-my-own” expression excited my sympathy. Undoubtedly Jack longed for that “something” his wife possessed.

One day Jack dropped a little hint. He indicated that all was not well—that there was deep longing in his heart. Ruth noticed it. She prayed and hoped, but said nothing. How many times these hints were made, I do not know. I am inclined to think they came quite frequently. Jack was unhappy with his own outlook and found it increasingly difficult to suppress his feelings. But Ruth made Jack feel at ease in her presence. She did not seize on every unfortunate

statement of his, make an issue of it, and apply high pressure. She merely smiled, spoke an encouraging word, and prayed. But she never forgot that her greatest mission was the salvation of his soul.

One day Ruth confided to me that Jack was under deep conviction. She suggested that I come over someday, let him open up to me, and then show him the way to victory. Ruth felt that the time had come. He was ready now. I consulted with my assistant pastor.

Had Ruth been a pressuring or nagging wife, we would have hesitated. But knowing her as we felt we did, my assistant minister and I went to visit their home. Ruth was conveniently away. This gave Jack an opportunity to be relaxed and gave us freedom to visit. A struggle was imminent, and sometimes it is easier when men can talk together—man to man.

Just how the Holy Spirit turned the conversation to tobacco, I do not recall. To Jack, tobacco seemed to be the symbol of his defeated life. Jack wanted victory. He told us that he had tried to quit smoking on his own, but it hadn't worked. He was almost desperate.

We talked about a number of things, because often tobacco and its problems are only indications of other problems. We wanted Jack first to come to an understanding of who Jesus is and the power He stands ready to give us. So often there is such a separation—such a gulf between the soul and the Healer of souls.

Christ promised, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."¹ And with Nehemiah we could cry out, "Thou, even thou, art Lord alone; thou hast made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein, the seas, and all that is therein, and thou preservest them all; and the host of heaven worshippeth thee."²

If Jack Nyder could be led to find this wonderful God, he could be set free, not merely from the symbol of his defeated life, but also from defeat itself. With this victory realized, would he not also worship Him who made the heavens?

This was our challenge that night as we visited with Jack—to acquaint him with the Saviour.

I have discovered this in my ministry: It is possible to live so near to our Lord and be so surrendered to Him, that the Holy Spirit can guide us as He has promised. He certainly did guide us that night in Jack Nyder's home.

The first thing the Holy Spirit did, as I recall the incident, was to place a deep love in my heart for Jack Nyder. He filled me with an intense desire to see Jack saved—delivered! And when the Holy Spirit works in the heart of one of His ambassadors, be it a minister or a consecrated layman, and works in the heart of the one needing deliverance, *something* is bound to happen. And we are not disappointed. There was a tremendous struggle, but victory was won.

When we got down to grips with Jack, we discovered his real problem. He was

looking to his own weakness instead of to the power of the One who made the heavens, who turned the water into wine, who raised the dead to life, who fed the five thousand, who stilled the roaring waves, who showed throughout His earthly ministry that He was God, the Creator of the world, the One whom the Scriptures declares "was in the world, and the world was made by him, and the world knew him not."³

Jack was like the disciples on tempestuous Galilee. They tried in their own power to save themselves. They applied their own skills. They applied every human effort, when all they needed to do was to call, in faith, on One right in the boat. He was ready and able to help them. He was Master of the sea and the wind; He had made them. He could speak to the mighty storm, "Peace, be still,"⁴ for He is Master of earth, sea, and sky.

That night Jack Nyder met this Jesus. He learned that it is not "by might, nor by power, but by my spirit"⁵ that victory is won. This was a new realization—a new concept to him. He needed to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ and be saved from sin,⁶ including tobacco.

How did we know this is what Jack needed? By the way he answered the questions we asked. Every time we spoke of what God has promised, Jack would counter with, "I can't promise," or "I am not going to tell you I can," and so on. It was quite a while before Jack saw that we did not want to hear him promise anything, but simply to have him understand the many things God was promising him. Then the light began to shine in his understanding.

"Don't promise me anything," I begged repeatedly, looking intently into Jack Nyder's eyes, "just look at what Jesus has promised you!" He promises salvation, victory, and eternal life.⁷ We shared with him some of these mighty Bible promises. One by one they found their way into his heart. But it was dark, and it took a while for him to see the light in its beauty.

I knew something of the struggle that was going on in Jack's heart. I knew he desperately wanted victory. I knew this was the hour and prayed that God would give me wisdom and understanding on how to proceed. The more Jack protested, the more I prayed. The more he doubted, the more I held on. He equated salvation with victory over tobacco. God promises both!

I believe we must have been in soul labor with him for fully two hours before the light dawned in his conscious mind.

"If you go back to smoking immediately, Jack," I said, "we shall not blame you. We have not come to ask you to manifest *your* strength, but for God to demonstrate *His* power." We shared several thrilling experiences of victory with Jack. Finally it dawned on him that "power belongeth unto God."⁸

We had been fulfilling God's own command, "They shall . . . talk of thy power."⁹

As I watched the struggle go on, I feared that perhaps Jack was fainting under his own inability to gain victory. But "he giveth power to the faint."¹⁰ Does not the Son of God declare also, "All power is given unto me?"¹¹ "His word was with power"¹² to those who received Him in faith.

As we continued steadfastly to help this man take hold of God and to let go of self, we sensed that the power of the Lord was present.

Jack was yet to be amazed at the mighty power of God. We continued to press the battle. We recognized that light was getting through to Jack's longing, if darkened, soul. Had not Jesus declared we could be "endued with power from on high"?¹³

After a lengthy battle with the "prince of this world," we saw this man delivered "from the power of Satan unto God."¹⁴

The apostle Paul freely speaks of the source of this power to save. Said he, "For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse."¹⁵

Before the visit was over, we saw the "excellency of the power" which was "of God."¹⁶

Jack knelt in prayer with no promise of his own, no power of his own, no strength of his own. Together the three of us reached out for the exceeding greatness of His power. Jack Nyder was, at that golden hour, delivered "from the power of darkness"¹⁷ to "the power of an endless life."¹⁸ He was a new creature in Christ Jesus.

This is wonderful, but not new. This power was the same as manifested at Creation when God spoke and it was done.¹⁹ It has been in continuous evidence ever since, for God is "upholding all things by the word of his power."²⁰

Contrast, if you will, this great omnipotent power with the power of a creature that perishes:

"Thus shall ye say unto them, The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, even they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens."²¹

When the eyes of Jack's understanding were opened to receive this precious gift of victory from our wonderful Saviour, we suggested: "Jack, you may recall how Jesus stated that if our faith were even as large as a tiny grain of mustard seed, we could expect to have Him remove any mountain of difficulty. What would you think if, as a token of your mustard seed of faith, you brought your tobacco out here in this room and placed it before us as we dedicate ourselves to God and give this thing to Him?"

I quickly hastened to add, "And brother, if you smoke within fifteen minutes after we're gone, we shall not criticize nor condemn you. We are merely making

this suggestion so that what we do will be pleasing to God. 'But without faith it is impossible to please him.'"²²

With the faith and confidence of a little child, and now fully depending on God and not on self, Jack slipped into the other room, gathered his tobacco together, and put it all in a paper sack. He brought it back to where we were seated in his living room, and we knelt around it to pray.

As we took hold of God's all-powerful Word, the Holy Spirit was present, and the miracle of grace was accomplished. God has truly delivered Jack from the thing for which he was "all [his] lifetime subject to bondage."²³

We took the little sack of tobacco home with us. I forgot it and left it in my car overnight. The next morning when I went to the car, I smelled something that nearly forced me out of the car! I opened the sack and exclaimed, "I think this is the foulest tobacco I've ever smelled!" It seemed as though the devils had entered into that tobacco just as they had the swine that Jesus permitted them to enter long ago. Read the story in Mark 5.

A few weeks later Jack Nyder was baptized into God's family and united in fellowship with the church. You can imagine the real joy in the life of Ruth Nyder, his praying, believing mate!

How wonderful it is to see victories like this take place. What a God we worship! Of Him it is said, He is "Lord alone." He "made heaven, the heaven of heavens, with all their host, the earth, and all things that are therein." And as "the host of heaven worshippeth thee"²⁴ because He is Creator, so we also "remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy,"²⁵ for the making of the Sabbath was His concluding creative act on Creation week. We therefore keep the Sabbath in token of our faith and confidence in Him and His creative power at work in our lives today.

This powerful God stands ready to save us and to rebuke any habit to which we may find ourselves a slave. Let us trust Him to make us victorious. He has never failed; He will not fail you or me! And let us not forget that what happened in Jack Nyder's home that night was but a harvest of Ruth Nyder's quiet, unpressuring, but prayerful consistent life. She sowed the seed. We reaped the harvest.

Dear Lord, You have said that You have given to every one his work.²⁶ Help me, I pray, not to be so farsighted that I lose the sense of a loving prayerful mission to those within my home. I pray that I shall not be an offensive or preaching spouse, but your quiet, loving child so that those dearest and nearest to me shall find Jesus Christ as their personal Saviour too. I thank You that Jesus has promised of the Holy Spirit that "he will guide you into all truth."²⁷ I ask believingly and thank You triumphantly in the precious name of Your Son Jesus Christ, my Lord, Amen.

Reflection: Whether with another praying together or in a prayer group you

may find a divine pressure prevailing your association as you try to reconstruct in your thinking many of the scriptures used in this chapter. Do not hesitate to turn to them repeatedly. Remember, "faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17).

As we conclude this story, let us consider seven great Bible facts:

1. The Lord "that maketh all things" named Cyrus, King of Persia, giving him a mission to perform, some one hundred years before his birth (Isaiah 44:24, 28).

2. So "the Son of man" gives "to every man his work" (Mark 13:34).

3. But our Lord does not leave man alone to perform his mission, for we are "workers together with him" (2 Corinthians 6:1).

4. It is important, in fulfilling our mission, to understand that we must not assume the responsibilities of the Holy Spirit, one of which is to convict of sin (John 16:8).

5. Instead of our "pushing" others to do right, our part is to unite in a sacred "courtship" which leads others to desire the Lord who is ours (1 John 4:19).

6. Then our prayers become powerful (Matthew 18:19,20; 1 John 5:16).

7. The Spirit-laden, creative word of our Lord brings about the new birth (1 Peter 1:23; John 3:6; Psalm 33:6,9).

21. Jeremiah 10:11.
22. Hebrews 11:6.
23. Hebrews 2:15.
24. Nehemiah 9:6.
25. Exodus 20:8.
26. See Mark 13:34.
27. John 16:13.

References:

1. Matthew 28:18.
2. Nehemiah 9:6.
3. John 1:10.
4. Mark 4:29.
5. Zechariah 4:6.
6. See Acts 16:31; Matthew 1:21.
7. See Galatians 1:4; 1 Corinthians 15:57; 1 John 2:25.
8. Psalm 62:11.
9. Psalm 145:11.
10. Isaiah 40:29.
11. Matthew 28:18-20.
12. Luke 4:32.
13. Luke 24:49.
14. Acts 26:18.
15. Romans 1:20.
16. 2 Corinthians 4:7.
17. Colossians 1:13.
18. Hebrews 7:16.
19. See Psalm 33:6.
20. Hebrews 1:3.

8

“I’ve Had It With Humility!”

How Jean lost her home because she played Creator.

Jean came from a distance to seek counsel. Her marriage was crumbling. Her husband was stepping out on her—everything was going wrong. She was confused, bewildered, heartbroken. As we visited together, several things came to light.

Jean had been unpopular in school from the very first grade. Her mother had dressed her in old-fashioned clothes. With her long hair and unusual shoes she looked very different from the rest. In spite of her protests, Mother insisted this was the way she would be dressed. This parent made Christianity a galling yoke in spite of the fact that Jesus said, “My yoke is easy.”

When Jean reached academy, she took matters in her own hands and cut her hair, modernized her dress, and rebelled against some of the rules and regulations her parents had shackled her with. Although some of the rules had been good, others had been unreasonable. But Jean did not get along well in the academy either. She was not popular with the students, nor was she a good student. And at the end of her senior year she failed to meet college entrance requirements.

Discouraged, confused, and with a feeling of rejection, Jean decided to leave

home and go off to a distant city, where no one would know her, and start all over again. This she did, enrolling in a business college in her new environment. Then she felt she was being accepted for what she really was.

Without the influences of her home and friends, Jean found it easy to drift away from the life and standards she had always been taught. She left the Lord and found new friends outside the church. One of these was Paul, a handsome young man with many talents. To her amazement Jean found out that Paul, too, had at one time been a member of the church.

It wasn’t long before they were married and set up housekeeping next to Paul’s parents’ home. My, what a wonderful time she was having. Everything was going great. It was fun, fun, fun! It seemed there was always somewhere to go and something to do.

But time has a way of bringing reality to light. It wasn’t long before Jean’s conscience bothered her about working on the Sabbath. Even though she was not now a member of the church, she realized the enormity of her sin against a Christ who had never been unkind to her, so she decided not to work on the Sabbath any longer and persuaded Paul to join her in this decision, but neither of them experienced a real conversion.

Paul had clean habits. He did not smoke or drink, although otherwise he was a backslider. Paul didn’t like to go to church, and he salved his conscience by saying that he just didn’t like the minister. Week by week they starved their spiritual nature by depriving themselves of the study of the Word of God and of fellowship in the church.

They both worked and began to do well financially. But they were lonely. Jean was naturally sensitive and easily hurt, so she didn’t mix much with her work associates. She didn’t visit with her parents because they were “religious fanatics,” and she equated their extremism with her unpopularity in school days. Since she never had confided in her parents, she decided she now had a right to her own tears.

Jean didn’t want a baby—just hobbies and a hubby. The years slipped by. Some were good, others not. After nine years, she realized that she was going to have a baby. She began to be excited to think that she would have someone with whom to share her time while Paul was away at work.

During this time Paul changed his job. His new job demanded his being away from home often for a week or more at a time. This bothered Jean. She even began to worry about his fidelity, but Paul assured her that he would be faithful. In spite of the fact that she tried to remind herself that Paul loved her, she became increasingly irritated in this new work situation, and her irritation showed every time Paul came home.

The days were long, and often Paul’s mother, who lived next door, came over.

She tried to guide Jean in her handling of the baby. It wasn't long before resentment began to build up toward Paul's mother, for Jean did not want anyone to tell her what to do.

She wanted just one thing—Paul must come back home and find work where he could be with her every evening. Jean became so upset that she began to have dizzy spells. She wept a lot. Poor Paul was torn between his loyalty to his employer and his love for his wife. As tensions mounted, Jean finally threatened to leave Paul if he didn't change his work. This caused Paul to stay away from home even more. He didn't want to come home to that morbid atmosphere and the stormy sessions that almost always followed.

When Paul was gone, his mother irritated Jean. When Paul came home, it was a constant battle over his work. Then one day Jean threw her wedding ring at Paul and cried, "There, take that! It doesn't mean anything to me anymore."

Paul retorted that he knew that and had known it for some time. He told her he didn't love her anymore either.

"I should have left you before the baby was born!" Jean snapped back.

When Paul became infatuated with a young woman, Jean finally woke up and realized that she was truly losing him. He was a talented musician, a good carpenter, a fine mechanic, and a splendid pilot. Besides these talents, he showed promise as a photographer and was recognized as an outstanding teacher. He was a hard worker and a good provider.

Jean became aware of what a fine man she was losing when Paul left on his next trip without kissing her good-bye. What was she going to do? She wanted to win him back. It was at this time that she came to see us, hoping we might give her some miraculous formula that would answer her growing problem.

Jean sat in our apartment and poured out her story. Then we began to exchange ideas. Among other things we suggested that she might wish to study the law of the "third horizontal level down" as suggested by the apostle Paul in Philippians 2:3. It says, "Let each esteem other better than themselves." This would mean that she look up to Paul instead of looking down on him. This would help to make him feel at ease in her presence.

Jean's eye brightened as she said, "You know, I didn't realize that that's what I've been doing, looking down on him. That's where I've missed the boat!"

Then we explained further to Jean the Bible doctrine of humility. It finds its basis in the fact of history—the life and death of Jesus Christ. Because He loved us, He helped us to feel at ease in His presence (Matthew 11:28-30). Praying for the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we began to share with Jean the secret of reconciliation. "Could it be Paul doesn't feel at ease in your presence, Jean, for two reasons: a lack of freedom of his own choice and a lack of humility on your part? Could it be that, unconsciously, you have tried to choose his job for him?

When he didn't concur with your choice, you attacked his character. Expressions which belittle Paul make him feel ill at ease in your presence." We kindly reminded Jean how she felt when her mother-in-law tried to tell her where she was not doing things right. "You wished she would stay away, didn't you?" we said.

"Yes, I guess I did," Jean said, her eyes filling with tears.

"No one wants to be told what to do or how unworthy he is," we continued. "One of the basic needs of the human heart is to be loved and accepted—to have a sense of belonging. You needed this in school. You suffered from its lack. In an attempt to get it you rebelled against your parents' wishes and cut your hair and changed your appearance. You felt uncomfortable in their house and wanted to get away from their holier-than-thou attitudes.

"You attempted to forget your past by enrolling in a business college where no one knew of your past unpopularity or anything else about you. You longed for acceptance. This is a perfectly natural feeling and a necessary one. And this is why you clung so tenaciously to Paul and wrapped your life around him. You needed the security he could offer—an experience you had never known. But could it be, Jean," we went on, "that little remarks which belittled Paul play a part in the pending separation?"

Jean began to see herself and realized the situation in a new light. We began to develop the idea that the law of humility was one of the keys to her successful retrieval of her husband. We endeavored, with God's help, to paint a picture with scriptural foundation of the joy of following God's plan of esteeming our partner and neighbor better than ourselves. Jean was quick to see the reasonableness of it all and where, perhaps, she had failed.

"I can see now, Pastor Coon," she said, "where I've been terribly wrong. I know now why Paul said to me the other day, 'You think I'm a sinner, don't you?' He felt I was looking down on him. I broke the law of humility. Not long ago he said, 'How do you think it feels to be constantly doubted and questioned? You never approve of anything I do. In fact, you make it obvious that you don't love me.' I'm sorry I made him feel this way. I've made him miserable every time he wanted to do something I didn't feel he should. He said to me just last night, 'I helped you when you had trouble, but you don't seem to care about me—you're interested only in yourself.'"

"It's easy to lose sight of our partner's problems and focus on our own," we suggested. "We've all been guilty of it. The important thing now is to realize it and ask the Lord to help us change."

"I've been on the holier-than-thou level," Jean admitted. "I've told Paul, 'I wonder just how much you believe in God. Your actions sure don't show it.' I know, too, that I've said, 'You don't know how close I came to leaving you

before the baby came. Why don't you wake up before it's too late.' I didn't realize the effect these words were having on Paul. I've been operating on the wrong level, but I shall mend my ways."

How many of us are guilty of the same offense? Philippians 2:3 clearly states that we ought to esteem others better than ourselves. Most often one wants to protect himself by attacking his partner.

Every such statement had tended to make Paul feel more ill at ease in Jean's presence. Every such expression had widened a breach already begun.

Had Jean's parents taught her the art of humility, love, and kindness, it would have meant far more to her than the long braided hair and the unbecoming dress.

In fact, this character of humility is one of the first laws which the Sabbath-keeping Christian should learn.

"The first thing to be learned by all who would be workers together with God is the lesson of self-distrust."² But Jean distrusted Paul and was now suffering intensely as a result.

The first angel of Revelation 14, verses 6 and 7, calls on the inhabitants of the earth to worship the Maker of heaven and earth. We may desist from work on the Sabbath day, but unless we distrust ourselves to the place where we can place our confidence and trust in Jesus, we cannot in reality worship Him in spirit and in truth. We should speak of our trust and confidence in others. Paul needed words of confidence from a heart of love. For one to realize one's own creatureliness is to cease these holier-than-thou remarks about others.

How inconsistent it is for a true worshiper of the Creator to take on a self-righteous air! Of all the people in the world, Sabbath keepers should be the most humble because of a realization of the greatness of Christ our Creator and the creatureliness of self.

Had Jean's father and mother taken the attitude of humility, something wonderful might have happened to Jean in her early years. Fanaticism does strange things. It often confuses the individual to such an extent that he loses his sense of security. In fact, it is the lack of security in Jesus Christ that breed fanaticism in the first place. Much emphasis is placed on a particular area of activity to the neglect of others. Jean had never found her security in Jesus. She had never felt that Jesus loved her and that in Him she might have complete acceptance. Complete acceptance! Oh, how He wants us to know this!

Notice God's words in Isaiah 57:15: "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones."

But some may say, "Yes, I see that God dwells with the one who is humble, but where does love and a sense of acceptance come in?"

Here it is: "He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God."³ So true love is willing and ready to humble itself in an effort to salvage another heart and build its hope.

This humbling of ourselves before God and man does not detract from human dignity, but it brings the high and lofty God into our hearts. And with Him comes love, acceptance, and all that the human heart needs. Jean needed all of these as we all do. Her parents chose extreme, fanatical ideals instead of love and humility. And in doing so they greatly damaged their own daughter. They set up a loneliness in her heart that caused her to demand an unreasonable security from her husband. Because he did not know how to open his heart to Jesus, he became confused over Jean's demands and finally decided he had had enough.

Then instead of Jean's winning him back through humble love she made unfortunate statements which widened the breach. She was unable to give love, for she could not give that which she did not possess. "He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love."⁴

Man, a worshiper, comes to his Maker like an empty vessel. His Maker sheds abroad the love of God. So you see, love comes through humility. "And we love . . . because he first loved us."⁵

Down on our knees we all must go,
Then in our hearts God's love will flow.
Thus we dispense to others, too,
Infinite love—so deep and true.

As we neared the end of our interview, Jean determined to go home and put into practice the things she had learned. "I believe the Lord will help me," she stated, "and I am willing to follow your counsel. I know it is of the Lord."

We wished her the Lord's blessing and had prayer together before she left.

Several days later Jean returned. Although it took two hours to make the trip, she was glad to take the time. In fact, she was walking on air! What a wonderful change had taken place! It was like a little bit of heaven. Her face looked bright, and she spoke with clarity. Her eyes sparkled as she rehearsed the events of the past week. Paul was beginning to be his old self again. And although she didn't find it an easy matter to be humble and kind, she was experiencing thrilling dividends.

Jesus said at one time, "For by thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned."⁶ Jean's new vocabulary came from a new heart. "for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh."⁷

Humility is the law of the "third horizontal level down." Philippians 2:5-9 indicates that Jesus Christ is very God. His is the highest and first level. He humbled Himself and took on the form of man. He took an immense step down.

God should be on the highest level in our thinking. Our fellowman should be on a level between God and us. And we should be on the third level in our attitude.

Jesus Himself conveyed this attitude. He gave first allegiance to His Father; then He cared about the needs of others; He gave concern for His own needs last.

Paul wrote, "Let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus."⁸ To feel our creatureliness is true Sabbath humility.

Humility, then, is one of the very first, and one of the finest, characteristics of a true worshiper. This must be—will be—revealed in our words and actions as well as in our dress. There is no point to our dressing so as to give a holier-than-thou attitude, nor is there any point in allowing words to flow from our lips that condemn and cut another. When we do this, we show how far short we come from meeting the divine plan. It is an inconsistency that the whole world can see, and it brings only reproach to Christ and His church.

Jean was experiencing the blessings of the Lord. She was realizing what others, too, have found—that joy comes in esteeming others better than ourselves. As we "honour all men,"⁹ we demonstrate Christian humility. But it wasn't easy for Jean to be humble and selfless. It was a daily cross to bear, a daily battle. But it was producing marvelous results.

A few weeks later, however, we received a letter from Jean that disturbed both my wife and me. We read it, and almost wept, for we could almost see the consequences. It seems that a Christian teacher had observed Jean's new attitude and saw what she was doing. It evidently didn't meet his approval, and so he took Jean aside and talked with her. This prompted her to write to us. In the letter she stated, "I have talked with a Christian worker, and he says that such humility on my part is entirely unnecessary. And more than this, I'm tired of this approach in solving my marital problems."

We felt sick at heart. Is there ever a time when we should be "tired of being humble," and yet expect God to effect solutions? We thought of the heartache Jean had suffered and the progress she was making. We pictured in our minds the happiness that she and Paul were now beginning to experience and the blessing they in turn could be to others in similar difficulty. But poor Jean, backed up by a fellow Christian, wanted no more of the Lord's plan.

It wasn't a complete shock, then, when later we learned that the favorable trend that had started reversed itself. Once more Jean and Paul quarreled and fussed. Finally, according to the latest report, Paul had left, and Jean had little hope of his return.

Tragic, isn't it? A continued program of humility on her part might have been used of God to prepare Paul to receive a tremendous solution. God promises, "For thus saith the high and lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose name is Holy; I dwell in the high and holy place, with him also that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones."¹⁰ Humility always brings rich rewards. Its dividends are fabu-

lous. This is part of the philosophy of the Lord of the Lord's day.

How are things in your home, your church, your neighborhood? Could they be improved by your taking the third horizontal level down? Why not try it and see? Remember, "he that humbleth himself shall be exalted," and he "that exalteth himself shall be abased."¹¹ Will you offer this prayer?

Dear Father in heaven, Thou hast commanded me to "let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus: who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: but made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name which is above every name."¹² Thou hast also declared that "he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." I come humbly at Thy feet, asking that Thou wilt "create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." Believingly and yet unworthily I accept this new attitude hour by hour in Jesus' name. Amen.

Reflection: In concluding this chapter with the sad downfall of a home that might have been restored, we suggest that you review the seven great Bible facts. Then alone or in your prayer circle seek from Christ a renewal in your life of a humble attitude.

1. A most vital lesson always to bear in mind as we observe the command, "Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. . . . The Lord made heaven and earth," is to accept our creatureliness. We must cry out with the psalmist, "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; what is man, that thou art mindful of him? or the son of man, that thou visitest him?" (Exodus 20:8-11; Psalm 8:3, 4).

2. Especially should we be thus humble, in view of the fact that the wonderful dominion man once had has been sacrificed to Satan (Psalm 8:5, 6; Ephesians 6:12).

3. Christ has come to set us free from the bondage of sin and Satan (Hebrews 2:14, 15).

4. In this new freedom we are to "let this mind be in" us "which was also in Christ Jesus" who came from the highest level in the universe down to man's level; yea, even to the despised servant level (Philippians 2:5-8).

5. This Christlike attitude within us creates the miracle of our esteeming others better than ourselves (Philippians 2:3).

6. Only as this creaturely attitude is maintained can the Creator continue to dwell in our hearts (Isaiah 57:15).

7. The result of self-exaltation is self-failure, for he that "exalteth himself shall be abased" (Luke 18:14).

I'VE HAD IT

The Sinner-

I've had it with humility;
I'm finished with His cross;
I turn away from Calvary,
To hoard self's prided dross.

The Lord-

Oh, be not done with sanctity,
Nor whisper Satan's plea;
Be not yet done with Jesus Christ,
Who bled and died for thee.

The Sinner-

Exalted be humility,
But humbled be my pride.
I lift my heart repentantly
That Christ may dwell inside.

References:

1. Matthew 11:30.
2. *The Desire of Ages*, p. 250
3. 1 John 4:16.
4. 1 John 4:8.
5. 1 John 4:19.
6. Matthew 12:37.
7. Matthew 12:34.
8. Philippians 2:5.
9. 1 Peter 2:17.
10. Isaiah 57:15.
11. Luke 18:14.
12. Philippians 2:5-9.

9 “Just Pray for Me and Shut Up!”

The tragic mistake of professed Christians.

The title of this chapter is a quotation from a burdened heart, a crushed soul, a tormented spirit. It represents the cry of thousands who are amazed, dumbfounded, and shocked at professed Christians who have never learned the meaning of the title of this chapter. Christians sometimes revel in telling others what to do when they themselves do not know to “study to be quiet” and “to do your own business.”¹ forgetting that in “quietness . . . shall be your strength.”²

We pray that this chapter may be received as a message from God. It is for those who have a warped conception of their mission in life. It is for all who think that mission is to direct those whom only God can direct. It is to guide those whom only our Maker can guide. And it is to instruct those whom only our Creator and Redeemer is capable of instructing.

And who are these who have such a false concept? They are legion. They live on almost every street of every city and town of our land. They fill church pews and sing in our choirs and even lead in church activities. Let us illustrate what we mean by a warped conception of a mission in life.

The first example is that of Mrs. John White. Mrs. John White is a minister's wife living in a small town in Rhode Island. She is most conscientious. She is well educated. She is sincere. Her motives are the best. But in her religious zeal she sometimes does what a man told me that he often does in his missionary work. He put it this way: "I often work like the devil for the Lord." He did not mean to use slang. He meant that, while his motives were the best, his methods were atrocious. His sincerity was pure as a crystal spring. His methods were detestable!

Mrs. John White goes to church on the right day of the week. She pays tithe. She is an active worker. She visits the sick and prays for the dying. Her devoted and overworked husband says she is a great blessing to him. But Mrs. John White has never fully understood either the "mark of the beast" or the "seal of God" principle. She does not have the slightest idea that she—professed Christian and minister's wife—is actually practicing one of the principles of the "mark of the beast."

According to Revelation 13:13-17, the beast "causeth" or forces others to do his bidding. Since his bidding has to do with disobedience to God and one of the commandments, Mrs. John White has never paused to consider that the *principle* of force is the same whether we use it to persuade others to disobey or to obey. It is the same whether we use legal or merely mental pressure.

There are, we believe, tens of thousands of professed Christians who are practicing one of the "mark-of-the-beast" principles. We repeat, this practice is not necessarily confined to the use of legal pressure. The use of mental pressure is equally wrong. The difficulty is that we too often think that mental pressure exercised in an effort to advance truth is justified. But it may be devilish. It may be a mark-of-the-beast tactic.

Mrs. John White knows Mona Black and her husband Mark, who are also Christians. They have recently been baptized. Before this they had been members of a so-called "modern" church. Now they are happy in their newfound fundamentalist faith. They are rejoicing in a wonderful fellowship.

Mrs. John White also knows about Rosa and a few of the circumstances of her being in the Black home. Mona Black and her husband Mark had heard about Rosa, a little blind girl who had no home. Rosa had been living in abject poverty. Her bed was the corner of a foul-smelling room. She had never known love. Affection was never shown her.

Mona and Mark found their hearts opening to this poor wretched thing and decided to give her a home. They discovered soon, however, that the burden they had assumed was far greater than they had dreamed. Little Rosa seemed to have some involvement with demons. As she passed from one room to another, one or more of the evil spirits seemed to follow her.

Mona and Mark were filled with consternation when they realized what they had with them in their home. They wondered if they had made a mistake in taking Rosa in. They already had two lovely children, Maria and Priscilla. What would happen if Rosa were to become a permanent part of their family!

One day while they were earnestly pondering what to do, Mona said, "I wonder what Rosa will do to our love," not dreaming that Maria and Priscilla had overheard. Later Mona spied her two darling children in their bedroom on their knees. They were praying, "Dear Jesus, help Mother to know that if there is not enough love to go around, we will lend her some of our love."

A few moments later Mona went to where her darling children were kneeling and spoke softly, "Children, I want you always to know that Jesus' love is not limited. There will always be enough for all of us, including Rosa." The children were relieved.

Pastor and Mrs. John White had visited their parishioners, including Mark and Mona Black. At the Black home the pastor and his wife were professionally proper and courteous. But when they went on their way visiting other parishioners, they chanced to discuss what they had observed at the Black's residence.

As they chatted in the home of Mr. and Mrs. Killman, friends of Mark and Mona, the problem of Rosa came up. As the confidential conversation progressed, Mrs. White suddenly had a conviction. The Black family, she felt, was making a grave mistake in keeping Rosa. The more she thought about it the stronger became the conviction. Finally she decided it was her Christian duty to tell Mona Black. After all, didn't the circumstances warrant it? Mrs. White had studied much concerning the "mark of the beast." She knew that the so-called Christian world would use circumstances, too, for justifying their making and enforcing Sunday laws.

But what Mrs. White had never studied in this connection was the *principle* of the "mark of the beast." Because it was not legal pressure that Mrs. John White was about to bring to bear on the Black family, she overlooked the fact that mental pressure comes from the same root as legal pressure. Circumstances never justify our breaking the fundamental principle—the right of every adult to choose without outside interference.

Not long after the pastor's visit to the Black home, Mrs. White met Mona in a parking lot of the local supermarket. Now was her opportunity! As they were leaving the parking lot, Mrs. White felt that it was time to instruct Mona Black and have it done with. She would also belittle Mona to place her under conviction so she would listen. Even though Mrs. White had studied much concerning the Holy Spirit, she had never stopped to consider that conviction is *His* work—not ours. So dear Mrs. White took on herself the prerogative of the Third Person of the Godhead!

She determined to bring such a sting to Mona Black as would cause her to wake up and really listen—then, of course, immediately to comply with the dictates of Mrs. John White's conscience.

In her eagerness to make her point Mrs. White took no time to ask God what to say. In her holy zeal she thought she already knew. The Bible says, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God."³ But since Mrs. White thought she already knew, it never occurred to her to ask God. Moreover, she did not think to suggest that Mona Black herself ask the Lord what to do about her problem. Why should she suggest that when she already knew?

So Mrs. John White used her spiritual gun, her tongue, as the two ladies were slipping into their cars, and shot out her conscientious lip at Mona. "You are sinning," she exclaimed. She pointed a long, slender finger at Mona.

Of course Mona knew herself to be a sinner. She had read in the Bible that "all have sinned." But Mrs. White, in her zeal, forgot that particular text. So she did not think to add, "I am a sinner too." It never occurred to her that true Sabbath keeping puts all humanity in the creature class. Of course, if Mrs. White had suggested that she too was a sinner, she would have blunted the very conviction she was hoping Mona would sense.

Mona was almost shaking as she looked down that long-barrelled pointing finger of that seemingly sinless Christian zealously playing the part of the Judge of all the universe!

"Please explain," Mona gasped. She waited for the fatal shot.

And shoot Mrs. John White did. That shot penetrated Mona's heart. She felt the spiritual heart muscles tear. "You are sinning," repeated the holy-faced Mrs. White, "because you are giving your love, your attention, and your very heart to that blind girl of whom you can never be proud."

But there were some things that Mrs. White did not know. She did not understand the trauma through which Mona and Mark had passed before making their final decision to keep Rosa. She did not know of Mona's question which her little children overheard. Her ears had never caught the dear little children's prayer to God that they might share their love with Mother in her efforts to bring hope to Rosa.

Mrs. White had studied concerning the angels that would go forth with the seal of the living God. She knew that the seal is the Sabbath of the fourth commandment. It bears the name, the territory, and the authority of the lawgiver. That is what a seal carries to make it legal. So Mrs. White and many other sincere people had been telling their neighbors about the "seal of the living God."⁴

But what Mrs. White did not understand was more important than what she knew. Far more. It is that the seal represents the officer who affixes it. And that officer is God. And "God is love." Therefore the seal for which the Sabbath

stands is *love*. It is the antidote for the "mark-of-the-beast" principle. That was what our wonderful God was seeking to impress upon Mona and Mark—His love seal that Mona overheard her children praying about that they might lend to Mommy so Rosa could have her share.

Mrs. John White did not understand as she should that a divine God provides divine love. And divine love goes out to the sinner, no matter how unworthy he is. God causes His rain and His sunshine to bless both the just *and* the unjust.⁵ He is merciful to the unholy. His love is not confined to the respectables, nor to the averages. It goes all the way to the publicans. It encompasses a Mary Magdalene. It extends to a woman of Samaria. It flows like the warming rays of the sun to a thief on a cross.

We do not want to sit in judgment, but it seems that Mrs. White failed to understand the seal of God in its deeper meaning. It is the seal of love for those who are helpless, destitute—yes, even devil possessed.

What is the principle poor Mrs. John White neglected? That God might have given His own directions to Mona and Mark. Christians need to learn what an evil practice it is to be conscience for another—to assume that another *cannot* hear the voice of God as plainly as can we! How sad to try in our eagerness to "help," to be conscience for, a believing, trusting, though frustrated, child of God!

Mrs. John White was not the only one to practice the mark-of-the-beast principle. Martha Lawson did her bit too. Martha had heard via the grapevine some disturbing news. Her sympathy was aroused. Her determination to help was activated. She thought to herself, "I'll bet that Mona's husband will not always put up with Mona's idiosyncrasies. A separation may take place over this blind girl, Rosa, unless Mona changes her ways."

As Martha let her imagination run, she pictured a separation already brewing. Probably Mona and Mark were already sleeping in separate beds, for how would Mark put up with such a situation for long? Something told Martha that she must act immediately—and, of course, without prayer, as well as without the knowledge that the Blacks were earnestly seeking direction from the Lord.

In another parking lot one day Martha Lawson spied Mona Black. She did not have time to pray with Mona. Being in a hurry, Martha spoke from her open car window to Mona. "How is your sex life?" She hoped this question would help Mona to wake up and realize what her keeping Rosa might be doing to her marriage.

"Has it come to this?" Mona thought as blood rushed to her face. Like a flash of lightning Mona replied in the most stinging voice she could muster, "Just fine, and how is *yours*?" And with that she rolled up her window and drove home.

She parked her car and took her groceries inside. Slumping down on her davenport, she sobbed, "Oh, God, won't my Christian friends let me have even the privacy of my marriage bed?"

Without a doubt Martha Lawson could have given a beautiful Bible study on "the mark of the beast." Yet probably she returned home to fill out the missionary report for the coming Sabbath and jotted down her word to Mona as "one missionary visit." Little did she realize that in another ledger kept by angels her speech was listed as "one more mark for the beast."

Now, can't you imagine how Satan must have called a special committee meeting of his imps to give them a report. Methinks I hear him begin something like this: "You devils, listen. Martha Lawson just put down on her mission report card a mark. It represents a mark for the beast—and I am that beast. She works for the Lord—like us devils." And all the devils in hell laugh hilariously.

They slap each other on the shoulder. "Look there!" they jeer. "Look there! There is a Sabbath-keeping family conscientiously following our suggestions—as a needle follows the pole! They preach against the beast of Revelation 13 and then avidly follow its principles!"

Then methinks I hear the father of all evil state his future plans—his basic scheme. It is to cause the Black family so much frustration that they will finally be tempted to wash their hands of all church relationship.

But in this he failed, for the seal of love is an antidote for the "mark-of-the-beast" principle. Even though Mona was deeply distressed over the activities of those who claimed to be far removed from the "mark-of-the-beast" principle, she continued to cling to the arm of love. She could sing with triumph the principle presented in that great song—

O Love that wilt not let me go,
I rest my weary soul on thee;
I give Thee back the life I owe,
That in thine ocean depth its flow
May richer, fuller be.

O Joy that seekest me through pain,
I cannot close my heart to thee;
I trace the rainbow through the rain,
And feel the promise is not vain
That morn shall tearless be.

And when it seemed almost impossible to bear up longer under repeated pressures by conscientious friends, Mona could truly cry out through her tears:

O Cross that liftest up my head,
I dare not ask to fly from Thee;
I lay in dust life's glory dead,
And from the ground there blossoms red
Life that shall endless be!

—G. Matheson.

Yet the prolonged pressure of this "mark-of-the-beast" principle by conscientious well-meaning Christian friends drove Mona near despair. She sometimes reacted negatively as the demons, through professed Christians, sought to tear her heart out.

One day a lady dealer in sweet perfumes called at Mona's home. Alma Sither showed her products and was ready to leave. Standing there with her hand on the knob of the open door, she felt the same conscientious zeal that had possessed Mrs. John White, and Martha Lawson. She too had heard about the Black home—by now almost on the "black list." She might not have heard about how one of the leading officers of the church told Mona that she should not attend church anymore with Rosa, for her presence could contaminate the religious atmosphere of the sanctuary.

But Alma Sither took one last look at Rosa and then at Mona. With a school-teacher attitude she spoke. Her authoritarian voice was clear and penetrating. "You have no right to keep that blind girl in your home. What will she do when you pass off the stage of action?" With that Alma Sither herself passed off the stage of the front room propelled by a vehement push from Mona.

"Don't ever make such a statement again in the hearing of my daughter!" Mona cried and shut the door behind the saleslady fumbling with her wares just outside. Rapidly Alma made her way to her new expensive car. Mona glanced at her humble four-year-old Chevrolet and thanked God she had invested in a precious, though handicapped, soul.

One day a leading psychologist from Lincoln, Nebraska, Dr. Wise, came to Mona's town in Rhode Island. He had set up practice at a self-supporting hospital run by members of the same faith.

Having become acquainted with the family on the "black list," his interest was solicited by certain friends. Dr. Wise responded by working out a plan which suggested that Rosa go to the nearby state institution for evaluation. There Rosa would receive tests to determine a possible solution to her problem. Then they would offer suggestions.

This apparently kind attitude appealed to the Blacks, and they signed the necessary documents. But it was only to learn a little later that they had signed more than they suspected. They had actually committed Rosa. Now only a group

of specialists could release Rosa from the institution. Mona was heartbroken. She and Mark prayed to God for deliverance. And the Lord answered.

The specialists' report was that Rosa did not need hospitalization. A personal friend—one of the specialists—told Mona that Dr. Wise had confided in him personally that what he was attempting to accomplish was to "dump" Rosa on the institution—so that the local society would not be embarrassed by Rosa's unwanted presence among them.

By now in desperation Mona decided that she would seek help beyond the local community. She would go to some place where there would be neither cost nor knowledge. So she looked in the telephone directory. She felt impressed to seek advice from a Catholic priest, Father Human. She explained that since he did not know her or any of the circumstances she felt free to tell him the whole story. Father Human listened, attentively and sympathetically.

When Mona was through with her story she asked, "Father Human, am I doing the right thing or not?"

"Did not our Lord say," the priest replied kindly, "'Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these . . . ye have done it unto me'?"⁷ Mona returned home consoled.

As we glance back at the title of this chapter, let us share with you the reason we have chosen it.

Mrs. Grace Care, a Roman Catholic, had taken many Bible studies from two of the most beautiful members of our church family we have ever met. They were Dr. and Mrs. Meeker. Humble, wholesome and loving, they were highly respected in the Rhode Island community where they lived. It was about two hundred miles from where Mona and Mark Black lived.

After Dr. and Mrs. Meeker had left the community upon retirement, we held an ABC series of meetings in their city. Among those who attended was lovely, but confused Grace Care. At the close of one of our meetings we extended a call for commitment or recommitment to the Lord Jesus. We made the call so broad that people of any denomination might respond without obligation to church affiliation.

The front of the church and the aisles were filled with sincere rededicated souls standing in solemn commitment. Near the very back of the sanctuary at my left stood Grace Care. As the appeal was extended, Grace stepped into a little space left in the aisle near her. She was not conveying the impression that by this she was becoming a member of our church family. Rather her gesture represented exactly what was voiced by us as we extended the invitation. She was recommitting her life to her Lord to walk where He might lead the way.

On the other side of the sanctuary at my right about halfway up was the wife of Dr. Dixon. She was so elated to think that this fine Catholic friend had finally

made a decision that she could not restrain herself. She decided to rush to the side of Grace and say something. Just what, I haven't the slightest idea. But like so many zealous "saints" she felt that she would be remiss in her duty if she did not say something to Grace.

As Mrs. Dixon neared Grace, it seemed to Grace that pressure was probably on its way. Not that Dr. and Mrs. Meeker had used pressure. But other members of the church family had. Many in fact. This had gone on for five years by other zealous souls. Could Mrs. Dixon be evoking more pressure? Lifting both hands, Grace looked full into Mrs. Dixon's face and pleaded aloud, "Just pray for me and *shut up!*"

Dear Christian people so eager to witness a decision on the part of others can actually practice the "mark-of-the-beast" principle—mistakenly believing they are being guided by the Holy Spirit.

And "let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."⁸ Satan would love to have us look at others while making an even more serious mistake ourselves. It is that of thinking we would never succumb to such unworthy methods.

But the warning the Bible prophecy is sounding. The message of Revelation, chapter 14, verses 9 to 12, is for you and me, dear reader. It predicts a coming time of great persecution. The mental pressures exerted on Mona and Mark Black bear no comparison to that which is future for true children of God. Mona had been harassed mentally twice as she went to her car in supermarket parking lots. But the Bible warning is that the people of God can purchase nothing at any marketplace at a certain future time. "And he causeth all, both small and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads; and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name."⁹

During some of her darkest days Mona planted a camelia bush. Months later one of the bushes had not produced any blooms. Mona suggested to Mark that they had better destroy it. But Mark felt otherwise. He would prune it and provide special fertilizer and give it one more chance. This was in March. Two months later, when no blooms were to be expected from camelias, that "hopeless" bush produced a most beautiful bloom.

Mona felt that this was a message from God representing Rosa. God would make her life bloom, too, where only hopelessness appeared. The next year the same bush produced several beautiful blooms. It was supposed to be a white camelia. But of all things, the blooms were streaked with pink.

Mona was thrilled! God had caused this hopeless bush to produce. So He could do for Rosa. Mona and Mark decided never to give up no matter how discouragingly others might speak, or how much pressure they applied.

One day in the dead of winter a storm came down in its fury. It left Mona fearful and lonely. On this dreary day Satan attacked her emotions. Within hours the storm struck the home repeatedly. Seven times in succession Mona had to fall on her knees pleading with God to come to their aid and protect them all from the raging elements.

The next morning the storm continued unabated. Mona felt her deep need of sustaining strength. Would God please send some token of His approval of their course in helping Rosa? Mona looked up into the face of God and pleaded, "Dear Lord, if You approve of what we are trying to do for Rosa, will You do something very special on this stormy day? Will you please send a bird to the side of our window to sing his heart out?" Sure enough, only moments after this agonized plea a lovely songster appeared and did exactly that. He sang as if he were actually serenading that distressed family.

After several minutes he concluded his song. Mona then turned to God with deepest thanksgiving and appreciation. She said, "Please Lord, now no more songs from any other bird. That is how I will know You have answered my prayer." And no other bird appeared. Mark later came into the house. "Did you hear that wonderful song from the bird?" he asked.

"Yes, indeed," Mona replied. Then she told him of her prayer and its remarkable answer.

Many months later an amazing event took place. Mona was standing in the front room of their house. Suddenly Rosa pounced upon Mona's back. Mona fell to the floor. Rosa landed on top of her, biting her with the determination of a reptile. Mona had the presence of mind to take her thumb and finger and close off Rosa's nostrils so that she would have to open her mouth to breathe. At that instant Mona was able to release herself.

Mona ran to the bedroom. Rosa followed close behind. Mona fell on the bed. Rosa jumped on top again. Again she bit. Once again Mona was able to extricate herself and rush to the bathroom—just in time to slam the door shut and protect herself from the demonic power controlling Rosa.

When Mark entered the house a little later, Mona called for him to come to where she was. She related the terrible experience through which she had just passed.

Both Mona and Mark were heartbroken. They were at a complete loss to understand how or why this tragic train of events had taken place. They almost lost their faith in God.

The same evil one who had possessed their friends to exert mental pressure on them had now worked violently through Rosa.

A day or two later Mona confided in one of her closest and most sincere praying friends, Anabel Craxton. In turn they consulted with a new professor,

Dr. Furness, who had come to that Rhode Island town and who was teaching in the local university. He and the Craxtons shared the same house.

Dr. Furness had received his doctorate in the field of behavioral psychology. He had formerly been an evangelist. But his deep empathy for dear ones with broken hearts and broken homes led him to further his training in this particular field.

Dr. Furness and Mark Black had become friends. They had discussed the problem of Rosa before this particular outbreak of apparent demon control. The Craxtons also had discussed Rosa's problem with Dr. Furness.

As Mona was in deep distress as to what should be done now with Rosa, Mark walked into the house. It was Sunday morning.

"I was over to the university this morning and had a chat with our friend, Dr. Furness," Mark said. "We discussed Rosa and what happened the other day."

"Oh? And what did he recommend?"

"He indicated that Rosa probably did not know what she had done. If we should punish her for this episode it would be meaningless. She would, in all probability, remember nothing that had happened."

"What did he say to do?"

"He suggested that what she needed was more and still more love."

A few hours later Mona called her close friend Anabel Craxton, in whom she had confided.

"My husband just this morning had a chat with Dr. Furness at the university," she began. "Mark had gone up there on a little errand and stepping into a room saw Dr. Furness alone. This gave them the opportunity to visit briefly." Then Mona told her friend what Dr. Furness had advised.

"But," replied Anabel, "Dr. Furness is in Boston today. How could Mark have seen him?"

Mona replied that it was probably just before Dr. Furness left for Boston.

"No," replied Anabel. "Dr. Furness left for Boston last Friday. He will not be back until later this week."

Anabel was right. He had left for Boston Friday and was not yet back home.

Since I had known and visited with the Black family many times prior to this experience, Mona sent me a taped story of the whole experience.

She stated that, on the basis of this amazing appearance of "Dr. Furness," she and her Mark had decided that they would administer this love as never before to the heart of dear blind Rosa.

"Do you think it was an angel really, Pastor Coon?" Mona asked. And then she pleaded, "Please write me and tell me what you think."

Whether it was an angel, or whether Mark's eyes were so full of moisture that he mistook some other professor for Dr. Furness, we do not know. One thing

seems certain: God sent someone, either human or angelic, to impress the "seal of love" principle on Mona and Mark. It is the antidote for the "mark of the beast."

My reply was, "I would suggest that you double check to make sure whether it was a case of mistaken identity." But then I added, "Regardless of whether it was a man or an angel, I would interpret it as you have—that of a messenger from the Lord of love at a time you needed special guidance." Then I played the tape again and learned that Mrs. Craxton had prayed for God to send an angel to encourage Mark. I say we are still in the age of miracles. What do you say? Angels have appeared in the likeness of men many times.¹⁰

Considering again the title of this chapter, is it not time that those of us who profess the name of Christ cease trying to "play Holy Spirit"?

The title may sound somewhat crude. But it is worded this way to help us to awaken to the nature of the "mark-of-the-beast" principle. Whether that principle be applied in the form of mental pressure or by civil enactment, let us plead with God to give us grace to turn from it with all our hearts. The only way to be protected against the "mark of the beast" is to receive the "seal of the living God."¹¹

Otherwise we are prone to forget. Individuals we think in error may actually be following the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Unless we have earnestly sought God for guidance ourselves why not heed the plea of Grace Care to "just pray for me and shut up"?

"And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."¹²

Dear Lord in heaven, You have promised that "in quietness and in confidence shall be your strength."¹³ I ask that I shall be both quiet and confident that Your power and wisdom will be imparted to those whom I think are using poor judgment. I believe that "all power is given unto . . . [You] in heaven and in earth."¹⁴ I accept the quiet confidence that You can handle the problems of others far better than I, and I receive the power promised to "be quiet" and to mind my own business.¹⁵ In Jesus' power and name. Amen.

Reflection: We have discovered that to refrain from being conscience for others is one of the most difficult mental and spiritual exercises. In your personal life and in your prayer group discussion may the Lord guide into a "live-and-let-live" attitude.

Let us prayerfully consider the following facts:

1. In growing "more and more" in love we are to "study to be quiet" (1 Thessalonians 4:9-11).
2. "Brotherly love" includes doing our "own business" (1 Thessalonians 4:9-11).

3. There is tremendous strength of character revealed when we are confidently quiet (Isaiah 30:15).

4. There is a *seal of God*. This seal is placed on us by the Holy Spirit (Ephesians 4:30).

5. God, being *love*, gives man the power of choice (1 John 4:8; Joshua 24:15).

6. His seal, therefore, is one of *love* and is found in His ten commandment law. The center of His law of love is His holy worship day. It contains the three important elements of any legal seal, i.e., the *name* of the Lord, His authority or *title*, and the *territory* over which He presides. Of all Christians, Sabbath keepers should refrain from using mental pressure that resembles the mark-of-the-beast principle (Isaiah 8:16; Exodus 20:8-11; Revelation 13:17).

References:

1. 1 Thessalonians 4:11.
2. Isaiah 30:15.
3. James 1:5.
4. Revelation 7:2.
5. 1 John 4:8.
6. See Matthew 5:45.
7. Matthew 25:40.
8. 1 Corinthians 10:12.
9. Revelation 13:16, 17.
10. See Hebrews 13:2.
11. Revelation 7:2.
12. Ephesians 4:30.
13. Isaiah 30:15.
14. Matthew 28:18.
15. 1 Thessalonians 4:11.

10

Pious Pains in the Neck

Our Creator alone must rule in the home, the church, and the individual life.

"We're going to Peanut Park for Sabbath dinner, children." The words were pleasantly spoken but with a certain finality.

Ada's father was spending a few weeks with his daughter and her three children. Father meant no harm; he just overlooked the fact that his daughter sometimes enjoyed being counselled *with*. She and the children had always planned things together, especially since her husband had passed away. But when Grandpa visited, everything went the way he wanted it. There was never any choice.

This irritated Ada and frustrated the girls. "But," Mother would tell the girls, "Grandpa won't be here very long. Let's do it his way for now."

Ada's father was an intelligent, strong-willed man. In almost all respects he was a fine Christian. His big problem, however, was his overbearing nature. He tried to impose convictions on everyone else. He allowed no free discussion of an issue. When his mind was made up, that was final! There was never any room for a second-best choice. He displayed what some call "one-sided possessiveness." It is what I call a "mark-of-the-beast" principle. It says in Revelation 13:16 that "he causeth" or pressures or makes the choice for others, instead of permitting them to make their own decisions in matters of faith and conscience.

In a church where there are a number of such Christians, each one desiring to do his very best, yet refusing anyone else the freedom of choice, there will be discord. A case in point is a church which was being constructed by a lovely church family. Some of these men apparently had never heard of a "second best," and that it could be a good idea to allow another man to choose what might be considered poor taste.

A dispute arose over the position of the baptistery. The division became so sharp that when we held a series of meetings with them, the matter showed up. One group came to me hoping I would place my influence on their side of the question. Then the other side came, hoping for the same.

I explained that the important things are those of the spirit. While material things have their place, a second or even third best is much to be preferred over disunity.

"This is my church, and I'm going to have the baptistery where it should be" was the attitude of one man. He was displaying "one-sided possessiveness." How refreshing it would have been had each one said in his heart, "This is their church, too, and I will support the program regardless. As far as I am concerned, this would be the best place for the baptistery. But I want unity more than I want my superior judgment followed."

When people want to make choices for others, we call it a "mark-of-the-beast" principle. "He causeth," that is "maketh," their decisions for them. When in days of old Israel the people asked for a king, God gave them their choice even though it was not the wisest one. Think of it. God Himself allowed man the freedom of choice.

A mother came to me for counsel. She loved and believed in Christian education. She also knew the value of our church schools where the Bible is taught to the children in every grade from the first year. Her husband, however, was of another faith and did not fully understand the advantages of Christian education.

During the conversation, the wife exclaimed, "I want *my* children in church school."

"My children," I thought to myself. "Can this really be? Can ladies of a certain faith have children all by themselves?"

This lady's conversation caused me to be inclined to think that her attitude of "my children" was the very reason why her husband was objecting to *their* children being in the church's day school. Can one blame him for feeling the way he did? He didn't want the children have the same possessive attitude.

This fine lady had confused the issue. The fact that the church's day school was the very best place for her children was equated in her mind with her being the sole one, if need be, to make the decision.

As people come to me for counsel, I ask God for the gift of His Holy Spirit¹ and for wisdom—wisdom to present aright the principles for the inquirer to follow.²

I asked the inquiring lady if she and her husband had disputes over other details of family and business matters. She replied that they often did. Then I pointed out that if she would create an attitude of unpossessiveness in lesser matters, her husband would yield to her humble and sincere desires in such an important matter as the education of *their* children.

It is my conviction that these children would have been in the school of the mother's choice had she not taken upon herself the burden of making so many previous choices which should rightfully have been made by both of them.

One good woman persuaded her Baptist husband to come with her to visit me for counsel. Their home was about to break up. They had barely been seated when this fine, well-meaning woman began to point out her husband's errors. One was that he was not setting a good example before "my children."

"He does not so much as kneel when we have family prayer," she exclaimed sorrowfully. "What influence will this have on the children?"

I pointed out that Baptist people often sit or stand when they pray, while we usually kneel, and that while it would, of course, be a better example if both parents followed the same practice, nevertheless there are some things even more important than the physical position in prayer.

After some discussion of their problems, her Baptist husband came up with his diagnosis of their case. "The trouble in our home is that my wife insists that I serve the Lord *her* way."

When dear ones coming for counsel are guilty of possessiveness, I rebuke them as kindly as possible. At times this is part of the minister's duty.

A man in Texas related to me an experience that he had with his wife. One night they were dancing at a night club. Neither of them was a Christian. He was dancing with another woman; she with another man. At about 12:30 the husband suddenly gave his heart to the Lord. At 12:40 he left his partner on the dance floor and found his wife.

The man told his wife how he had just given his heart to the Lord. Then, pointing to the clock on the ballroom wall, he said in a tone that was firm and decisive. "Do you see the clock on the wall? I will give you until the clock strikes one to follow my example. If you have not become a Christian by then, I shall immediately divorce you."

She didn't, and he did!

The tragedy of tragedies was that he became a member of *our* church and lived to boast about it! He was practicing a "mark-of-the-beast" principle.

Was I the first one he told about this terrible event? I hope so. And I hope I was the last one too. This man could well have made the confession that came from

the lips of another man who had found what his trouble was. Said he, "I was working like the devil for the Lord!"

When I was still pastoring churches, a little mother-in-law came to me apparently seeking counsel. She was greatly troubled. Her son's family was in very poor financial circumstances. Living in the home with them, she observed a great deal of waste on the part of her daughter-in-law. For one thing, her daughter-in-law had several cats. These cats consumed food which the children needed.

The mother-in-law then put the question to me: "Is it right to take food the children need and give it to the cats?"

Of course I had to agree that this was not wise. Then she opened fire on her daughter-in-law. "I have told her repeatedly not to do it, but what I say doesn't do a bit of good."

"But you are the last one on earth that should be telling her," I instructed.

"Why?" she demanded. "My son would not even have a house to live in if it weren't for me."

"Is it your house?" I asked.

"It belongs to my son and to me," she replied.

I recognized immediately that this woman tried to "possess" the house, the home, and its occupants.

"The Bible says that your son and his wife are one."³ I began, "and they two are one flesh. It commands him to do nothing that will bring about the situation that now exists in their home. He is commanded to honor you⁴ and yet to leave father and mother."⁵

Then the little woman turned on me. "Why do you tell me that?"

I replied, "I am not telling you. *God* told us, and I am simply trying to obey what *He* commanded us all."

Still she was not satisfied. She thought I had had something to do with the instruction.

"No," I replied. "I was not so much as consulted when this passage was written."

This poor woman had confused the issue. She clearly saw that money was going to waste in the form of food for the cats. She knew the children needed it. But she did not realize that the attitude of domination would not work. If the daughter-in-law chose second best, then the mother-in-law should not try to force her own good judgment on the daughter-in-law.

Oh, how often good, well-meaning folk fail to understand that their friends have a sovereign power of choice. And if through inferior judgment they select second best, third best, or worse, this is their privilege. We are not to permit ourselves to present a cantankerous or nagging spirit.

A few days later the daughter-in-law came to see me. She was a beautiful meek young woman. She was most hesitant to so much as imply that there was trouble in the home. She started, rather, to discuss her need for prayer. She commented meditatively, rubbing her head, "Pastor, I am feeling ill. I wonder if you would pray for me. I have a severe pain in the neck."

I felt I should get to the problem at once, so I said, "Yes, I know. She was over to see me."

With that we were into the needed discussion.

Later her husband, the son of the little older woman, came over. He also hesitated to discuss the real problem of his mother's possessiveness.

He put his hand to his brow and said, "I have a terrible headache. It feels the most peculiar," he continued. "In fact, my head feels sort of empty from the eyes up."

I agreed, in a way not to hurt his feelings. Any man who will succumb to letting another possess him, his home, and his family must have rooms to rent somewhere! But he did not succumb for long. Finally he had to call a halt to her intrusions.

The little lady was infuriated and rushed over to see me again.

Nothing I could say would enlighten her. What a lovely relationship might have been theirs had she taken a quiet, unpossessive attitude. She could have supplied the needed fellowship, so essential for the spirit of those within, without the cats. She could have been so sweet that her son and daughter would have come to her for counsel.

She could have placed the grandchildren on her lap and told them stories which would have bound their hearts forever to both their mother and father.

One day my telephone rang, and upon answering it, the very weak voice of this little old lady was heard on the other end.

"I'm desperately ill," she said in a very low, painful voice. Then came the urgent request for prayer. Things had deteriorated to such a state that I felt compelled to take action this time. My duty seemed clear.

"I will pray for you under one condition only," I answered calmly and firmly.

"But I am almost dead!" The voice broke.

"I believe the Lord will heal you," I injected, "but I cannot feel free to request His healing for you unless you make a definite promise to God and to me. You must be willing to move out of the lives and home of your son's family the moment God heals you."

As I look back on the experience, I believe I should have been kinder to the old lady even in doing my duty of rebuking her for meddling. But I was thoroughly aroused, realizing that she was bringing unnecessary burdens on this young, struggling family.

The lady agreed. She was afraid she would die. It seems that people are then willing to make decisions otherwise well-nigh impossible. I prayed for her over the telephone, and she was almost instantly healed!

Overjoyed at God's mercy and feeling that it was a token to her that my counsel, though at times severe, was, nevertheless, of God, she moved out, found work, and was happy.

A few days later the daughter-in-law came back to see me. She looked better, talked better, and walked better! She came to tell me how much better she felt and how much happier the home was.

"The pain in the neck is gone," she exclaimed. And she was not referring to her mother-in-law. Yet the mother-in-law had learned her lesson, and the precious family's health was preserved too. It was a difficult ordeal, but victory resulted.

One may wonder why after we have shared so much instruction on love, kindness, and gentleness we should have rebuked the mother-in-law as we did. This deserves an answer and has been spelled out in the scriptural summary of this chapter. But let us add another experience with it. It is an experience of a precious woman who was making love to a member of my flock. The man was married. And she was a married woman.

I did all within my power to kindly encourage a separation, but to no avail. At this point I did what the Bible commands the servant of God to do at times. I wrote a letter of rebuke to her.

She later exclaimed, "It is very hard for me to understand how the man who wrote the book *Path to the Heart* could also have written such a strong rebuking letter to me."

The wicked at the last great day will lament when they see Jesus coming. They will be amazed at an angry Lamb. They will ask for the rocks and mountains to hide them from the "wrath of the Lamb." They had known only one side of the character of God. They seemed to have ignored the fact that the One who died on Calvary as the "Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world" is also to sit in judgment on the nations. "The Father . . . hath committed all judgment unto the Son."⁷

Through the years and in our many works we have dealt much on the love of God. But there are times when love must also reprove, or else it is no true love. The difficulty with most professed Christians is that the *pattern* of their lives is one of continual nagging and reproof, whereas such action *should* be the exception to the rule.

And furthermore let no one gain the impression that when we suggest quietness and silence this means we are not to be joyful witnesses for our Lord. We are to share the good news of His long-suffering. His mercy toward us is a

testimony we may share with all who are eager to identify with the victory God has given us.

Can we not pray, "Lord, help me to live in obedience to the convictions You bring to my heart and to allow the next person the same privilege? Help me to fulfill my mission by sharing my faith in Jesus. And by Your grace deliver me from accepting that devil-invented urge of possessing another's life—of seeking to control another's conscience."

Dear Lord, You have taught us to give counsel when adults *ask*. And even then You have taught us to answer with "meekness."⁸ Forgive us wherein we have unconsciously tried to be conscience for others instead of remembering that You have said, "To his own master he standeth or falleth."⁹ I ask believingly, and claim triumphantly, in Jesus' name. Amen.

Reflection: If our married children seem somewhat distant when we go to visit them, would it be well to examine ourselves and ask ourselves whether we have been overly possessive of them?

PARENT TO MARRIED CHILDREN

When Satan e're possesses me,
You'll see I act possessively.

As we conclude the thoughts of this chapter, may we give heed to the following Bible facts:

1. Scripture advises us to "study to be quiet, and to do your own business" (1 Thessalonians 4:11).
2. There is strength in quiet confidence. "In quietness and confidence shall be your strength" (Isaiah 30:15).
3. We are admonished to be "kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven" us (Ephesians 4:32).
4. Busybodies who mind the affairs of others are to be rebuked: "Wherefore rebuke them sharply" (Titus 1:13).
5. Children should honor their parents and older Christians and seek their counsel. Parents, however, are not to engage in nagging (Exodus 20:12; Leviticus 19:32; Proverbs 27:15).
6. When we do find it our duty to "reprove, rebuke, exhort," it should be "with all longsuffering and doctrine" (2 Timothy 4:2).
7. While most of our Lord's ministry was one of bringing comfort, forgiveness, healing, and life to those who asked; nevertheless, at exceptional times He uttered—His voice choked with tears—"Woe unto you" (Matthew 23).

References:

1. See Luke 11:13.
2. See James 1:5-8.
3. See Ephesians 5:31.
4. See Exodus 20:8-11.
5. See Exodus 20:31.
6. Revelation 6:16.
7. John 1:29; 5:22.
8. 1 Peter 3:15.
9. Romans 14:4.

11

No Blood on Our Boots

Understanding the necessity of creature-to-creature relationship in business dealings during the six working days.

Janice had taken her car to be repaired, but it was returned mechanically unsatisfactory. So she had refused payment until the mechanic corrected his repair job.

The mechanic, on the other hand, refused to do anything more to the car until she paid him for what he had already done. Years had passed, and the feud continued—Janice refusing to pay and he refusing to do any more work.

Then the Holy Spirit spoke to Janice's heart. Said she, "I am going to pay him for the work regardless. But more than this, I shall pay him 6 percent interest [the going rate at that time] for the time I have withheld the money."

I do not know the details of the misunderstanding, but that is not the point. Janice practiced the golden rule, full and running over. The spiritual muscle and sinew required to make such a decision comes from our Lord. "It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."¹ And who is this God who offers us the strength to do right? It is the Creator. He who is brought to view in the fourth commandment of the Decalogue. "In six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it."²

There are other ways of practicing the golden rule besides paying a mechanic for his questionable due. When at a Sabbath-keeping camp meeting, we older ones pass through the cafeteria line and are tempted to be short with those who serve, to administer a bit of scolding for what we consider their neglect, let us put ourselves in their place. Let us compliment them for their kindness in serving us. We have witnessed Sabbath-keeping Christians doing this more than once. How beautiful. We are then practicing the golden rule. It goes like this: "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets."³

Years ago we were developing some land in connection with a missionary project. We told the salesmen our plan. We explained that when people came to look at the land, the salesmen should first try to ascertain what kind of land the prospective customers were looking for and then try to help them find that particular land. We added, "Show them our land only if you think this is the kind of property for which they are looking."

I observed an expression of surprise registered on the faces of the salesmen. They did not seem to understand that this is the Christian way to do business. It never occurred to me that our attitude was particularly commendable. We recognized it only as part of true religion. Should a person be commended for practicing the golden rule? Not if it's a duty. The Lord commands, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself." He also said, "So likewise ye, when ye shall have done all those things which are commanded you, say, We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do."⁴

Somewhere, I do not recall now where, I read of a black man who found a bundle of money lost by an armored truck. He returned it immediately. But when the word got around, children in the public school made fun of the man's children. How could anyone be so foolish as to turn in the huge sum of money that might have made him and his family comfortable? The man was practicing the golden rule.

His family might well have quoted the apostle Paul when he said, "We are fools for Christ's sake . . . : we are weak . . . : we are despised. Even unto the present hour we both hunger, and thirst, and are naked, and are buffeted, and have no certain dwellingplace; and labour, working with our hands: being reviled, we bless; being persecuted, we suffer it: being defamed, we intreat; we are made as the filth of the world, and are the offscouring of all things unto this day."⁵

Another black man was once passing the scene of an accident. Someone was pinned inside a car. While a crowd was forming, with almost superhuman strength he forced the door wide open. When the onlookers turned in his direction to thank him, he was gone.

And speaking of black and white, brown and yellow what a tremendous day of judgment awaits many of all nations who have failed to practice the golden rule in their relations between races. And what a reward will be theirs who helped a child of another race of whom others were thoughtlessly making fun!

Recently a mother came to us for counsel. Her little seven-year-old boy was having difficulties with his young buddies.

"For some reason," she said, "they all shy away from him." When they returned from summer vacation, two or three were together one day in the hallway of the school building. When the little seven-year-old came up to where the three were visiting, they all sped away, leaving the little fellow all alone.

Children can be "innocently cruel." But they can be taught to be kind to one another. We have had the privilege of helping some school groups who had made fun of one of their number to change in a single hour. Let's teach our children to befriend any unfortunate child or grown-up.

This mother's little boy had a cleft palate. But the repair job was so well done that it could scarcely be detected. He lisped slightly however. In endeavoring to learn whether it was any fault of his that the children shied away from him we could learn of nothing. It could have been merely the slight lisp.

Surely one of the important lessons parents should teach their children is that of the golden rule. It is to put ourselves in the place of another. If we will do this, the practice can change our attitude toward those who may have some handicap or are of a different race, creed, or color.

The manner in which some of us react to those who on the surface appear different gives the impression that we think these people *chose* to have a cleft palate or a broken arm. One black minister who was a good friend of ours explained the color question this way. Said he, "I did not choose to be black. Had I chosen the color of my skin it would not have been black. Neither would it have been white. It would have been a ruddy color like that of Adam, the father of the human race."

Years ago at the home of professed Christians we heard two ladies discussing black people. I could scarcely credit what I heard as coming from those who profess Christ. His law. His golden rule.

But the same lady who seemed to lead out in this belittling conversation "shoved her weight around" also in her white church. She was noted for her efforts to influence the conference officials to move the pastors who were in charge of the church if they did not recognize her "superior" talents. Yet this did not bring her happiness. In the same church the overwhelming majority were unselfish, wholesome, and humble followers of the Lord Jesus.

The "good Samaritan" of Christ's parable followed the golden rule, although the teachers of Israel disregarded it. The priest and the Levite were teaching

theories while the Samaritan practiced the philosophy. Let each one of us be on the lookout to bless the unfortunate, to bring comfort to the bereaved, and hope to the discouraged.

Did you ever actually sit down and ask yourself the question, How would I want the other man to relate to me, were our circumstances reversed? We have observed that such an approach can, through Christ, build in us right attitudes and actions. They will be Christlike attitudes because Christ is living in us.

And how about practicing the golden rule as regards our relationship with the Lord Himself? When the ten lepers were cleansed by Jesus, only one returned to give Him thanks. Had they paused to inquire what they would have desired were the conditions reversed, how differently might have been their response!

If you were the Creator, how would you want humanity to respond to your beneficence, your generosity, your mercies? But our Lord's reason for instructing us to express appreciation for His goodness is not selfish. It is that others may come to Him for similar blessings. It is to spread abroad His goodness. It is to expand His gratuities. When one hears of God's goodnesses, His mercies, His answers to prayer, he too may be encouraged to seek similar help in his helplessness, similar strength in his weakness, and victory in his defeat.

The golden rule, if practiced, would place what people say and do in the best light, rather than the worst. We should ask ourselves the question, How would I wish others to interpret what I say and do?

"Honour all men," the golden rule cries out. "Speak evil of no man." "Let each esteem other better than themselves."* Practicing the golden rule would forever silence the talebearers and the gossipers. Golden-rule Christians will think of the scripture which commands, "Whatsoever things are of good report; if there be any virtue, and if there be any praise, think on these things."†

Yet, we should not demand that others have no qualms about our conduct, if we forget the Bible injunction to "abstain from all appearance of evil."‡ There is a proper balance between being suspicious and merely protective. For example, a teen-ager accuses his mother and father of not trusting him when he is refused permission to go out unchaperoned. The parent may rightfully reply, "I trust you. But knowing the frailty of human nature, I must protect you." God knows our frailty too, and this is why He has taught us not to run into temptation. "Can a man take fire in his bosom, and his clothes not be burned? Can one go upon hot coals, and his feet not be burned?"§ First Peter 2:20 makes clear that we are not to assume a "martyr" attitude when we are engaging in questionable conduct.

The golden rule suggests fair play in all areas of life. We have attended many a church picnic where scores of Christian believers have given someone a lift who had no means of transportation. Few are like Mr. and Mrs. Frank who had a new station wagon. But rather than take their new car to the picnic, they walked to

the church where all the cars had assembled. Then they opened the door of a car owned by another member while the driver was at the wheel. Proceeding to climb right in without invitation, they cheerily announced, "We are going with you to the picnic."

There was a poor family a mile from where Mr. and Mrs. Frank lived. This family had no way to get to the picnic unless someone would take them. Several church members had previously discussed how to make it possible to take various poor families. It was absolutely beautiful how different ones volunteered to go, in some cases, far out of their way to pick up those who had no transportation! Thus the poorer families could receive the benefit of the fellowship on this particular occasion. But when someone had suggested that Mr. and Mrs. Frank pick up the family near them, they stated that they could not afford the extra gasoline.

They could afford a lovely new station wagon. They could afford to have excellent furniture and a lovely home. It would have been a beautiful act of Christianity were they to put themselves in the place of the poorer families in the church as all the rest had done!

How would we want others to respond to our needs were we in the position of those without this world's goods? Those generous souls who went out of their way to supply both transportation and food for the poverty-stricken ones were happy. Their faces reflected it. Their voices echoed it. There is true happiness in observing the golden rule. But while some love and follow the golden rule, others are thinking selfishly and in some cases murderously.

The story is told of a wife and a daughter who were found murdered in their home in the southeastern part of the United States. The fact that the husband and father was not to be found aroused suspicion. The authorities gave out an all-points bulletin for the man who had apparently left his home.

He was found several hundred miles distant, in fact, in the state of Florida, where he was arrested, extradited, tried, and convicted. The police had found on his clothes and his shoes blood which matched that of the murdered victims.

When Jesus our Lord comes again, may He not find the blood of selfishness on our garments, but may we be washed in the blood of the Lamb. Our blessed Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God, offers to set us free from the selfishness that ignores the golden rule. "If the Son therefore shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed."¹⁰

And He is powerful enough to deliver us, for He it is who made the world.¹¹ He is still in the business of making new hearts, unselfish hearts, generous hearts. He declares, "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth."

If you, dear one, have not yet found the security in Him that reflects this generous Lord, why not ask Him to come into your heart, bringing His own

love that shares with others His character, His gifts, and His graciousness?

Dear Lord, may our day-by-day business reveal the character of Jesus. May a sense of divine mission follow each of us throughout the entire week. The Bible says, "It is God that worketh in you both to will and to do of His good pleasure."¹² We ask believingly that our work week shall be as conspicuously unselfish as our Sabbath day's worship. We thank Thee triumphantly for having heard our prayer in dear Jesus' name. Amen.

STANDING TALL

Standing tall with Jesus
And His golden rule—
Measurement of heaven.
Oft men ridicule
Those who humbly follow
Christ, the truth, the way;
Still His faithful children
Trust Him and obey.

Reflection: May we suggest that your prayer circle review the texts following and then see if you can reconstruct any of the experiences related here.

Let us consider the following Bible facts:

1. The Ten Commandments are based on love to God and love to our fellow-man (Matthew 22:37-40).
2. It is inconsistent for one to profess to keep the Sabbath day holy without keeping "his hand from doing *any* evil" (Isaiah 56:2).
3. "Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this *is the law* and the prophets" (Matthew 7:12).
4. We must be careful not to overlook any known duty on the basis of having done something else commanded by the Lord, "For he that said, Do not commit adultery, said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law" (James 2:11).
5. Our only hope for practicing the golden rule is in God, who promises to work in us "both to will and to do of his good pleasure" (Philippians 2:13).
6. If we follow our Lord's commands, we are still to say, "We are unprofitable servants: we have done that which was our duty to do" (Luke 17:10).
7. Keeping one commandment does not justify us in breaking another commandment, for "by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin" and "the wages of sin is death" (Romans 3:20; 6:23).

References:

1. Philippians 2:13.
2. Exodus 20:11.
3. Matthew 7:12.
4. Matthew 18:19; Luke 17:10.
5. 1 Corinthians 4:10-13.
6. 1 Peter 2:17; Titus 3:2; Philippians 2:3.
7. Philippians 4:8.
8. 1 Thessalonians 5:22.
9. Proverbs 6:27, 28.
10. John 8:36.
11. See John 1:3, 10.
12. Philippians 2:13.

12 Suicidal Storm— Superserenity

Receive the therapy of joy as Gail received it.

"You were too jovial in your song service tonight," remarked Gail, in a rather disgusted tone of voice. We were both in college, trying to adjust to life as we saw it. Gail's father was a philosophy professor, and Gail seemed to lean toward his quiet sophistication. I was an exuberant, optimistic extrovert who believed that religion and joy should always blend. I never dreamed in those days that I would be anything else but a joyful, cheerful, wholesome Christian, singing everywhere I went.

Then suddenly I found myself shocked by a blow from my own church people. In extreme trauma I became sick and was confined to my bed. I couldn't so much as crawl to the next room.

The story of this experience appears in one of our books. I won't repeat it here, except to say that an eminent physician diagnosed my case as nervous exhaustion. After a thorough examination, the doctor looked me in the eyes and said, "Six months in bed for you!"

Then, as my aching, weary, frustrated head lay on the pillow, God brought my mind back to an incident in which another physician had made a prescription for a case similar to mine. This doctor had offered his suggestion for a cure for nerve

problems. Now, three hundred miles from home, I was going to test this theory. I would try his suggestion and see if it would work for me. I had nothing to lose, and possibly a great deal to win. The thought of six months in bed frightened me. I was willing to try anything!

To the best of my ability I did exactly as my physician friend had suggested. To my utter amazement, and to the amazement of the doctor who was attending me, it worked! I was up and out of that bed in three days and returned home.

As marvelous as my recovery had been, I did very little about sharing it with others who needed it desperately—perhaps more desperately than I needed it.

Oh, yes, I did touch upon it now and then, with wonderful results; yet somehow it seemed that my one-track mind neither fully comprehended the secret of my own recovery, nor did I realize what it could do for weary, frustrated souls who go to their physicians only to be informed that there is not a thing wrong with them organically.

They need exactly what I needed.

It was literally several years, believe it or not, before I really got down to business in the matter of sharing this tremendous secret—this Bible therapy for nerves. When I did, I was amazed to discover that it did for others almost exactly what it had accomplished for me.

Then, as providence would have it, my wife and I met Gail again—that college student of years before. Now Gail was a professional counsellor, having obtained a master's degree in that field.

Gail, as well as I, had gone through some leveling-off experiences since those days when we were young people in college together. Gail had done graduate work and had excelled in the field of teaching. I had become a minister. Now it was my privilege to conduct a series of meetings in the church where Gail attended. While there we renewed our old acquaintance. We talked over many events that had occurred. Then I referred to the song service I had conducted. Gail had completely forgotten the remark she had made to me after that song service. Of course we laughed together.

We met on several occasions and spent time exploring many fields of thought. Gail had become an author, and since I had written several manuscripts, I asked her to examine them and offer me any suggestions. This she promised to do.

One day, after my wife and I had been over to see Gail, we both noticed that there was something lacking in her outlook. She seemed unhappy. Her expression was usually sad. She seemed disappointed in life.

One day Gail talked to my wife and me about the time since we had been in college together. She told us of some of the heartache that she had had to endure. It seemed to Gail, at times, that life was not worth living.

My wife and I began to pray for Gail. We asked the Lord to bring her the

release we had discovered when I had been stricken with nervous exhaustion.

She had found one disappointment after another and had focused her attention and interest on those disappointments. Her life had seemed one of sighs and failures. On these experiences she focused her gaze until she had contemplated ending it all.

I, too, had learned something since we had been in college together. I had learned that the philosophy I had as a young college student was the right one. My philosophy was that religion and joy would go together. In 826 texts the Bible teaches that the Christian ought to be the happiest person on the face of the earth. Once a person has found Jesus, he can exclaim, "In thy presence is fulness of joy; at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore."¹ It does not follow that the Christian will never have heartbreaking experiences. Rather he will rise above them in the consciousness that trials are to perfect patience.²

As my wife and I studied this subject, we learned that those who believe in the speedy return of Jesus are commanded to equate all the signs about us with joy. This is found in First Thessalonians 5:16, 18, where Paul enjoins, "Rejoice evermore." And, "this is the will of God."

We learned that the Lord's day of worship, especially, and all days in general, are to be equated with joy, rejoicing as the psalmist set us an example in singing, "This is the day which the Lord hath made; we will rejoice and be glad in it."³

Our study showed that, as far as our world is concerned, this program of rejoicing was initiated the first week of Creation when the "foundations of the earth" were "fastened"; "when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy."⁴

We learned that the hallowed day set up at the close of Creation week was in token of our Creator's rest, and that we are thus called to remember His wonderful works with rejoicing.⁵

In the days of ancient Israel God's professed people welcomed the coming of the holy Sabbath day as a bridegroom welcomes his bride. The day was welcomed by the blowing of trumpets and songs of gladness. And why not? No people in all the world at any time in history, except God's chosen ones, could boast of a God who is a loving Creator. The heathen who worshiped their gods of wood and stone could not make this claim. None but the worshipers of Jehovah could point to the starry heavens and exclaim, "The Lord is the true God, he is the living God, and an everlasting king. . . . He hath made the earth by his power, he hath established the world by his wisdom, and hath stretched out the heavens by his discretion."⁶

This idea is in harmony with the true Sabbath-keeping philosophy of thanksgiving, which runs throughout the Scripture whenever God is at the center of the picture.

We had been teaching in our lecture series that, "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine,"⁷ and that, "the joy of the Lord is your strength."⁸

We had concluded that self-centeredness leads to self-destruction: "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself; but in me is thine help."⁹

This truth is illustrated in a statement which a guide at a mental institution made to a guest in answer to a question. The guest was impressed with the intelligent conversation of most of the inmates. The guest wondered why it was that they were in the institution. The guide said this: "Yes, these people can converse intelligently, it seems. They are in this respect much as are other people. But they are in this place because, if you will notice carefully, their conversation points almost entirely, directly or indirectly, to self."

God's holy day, when rightly observed, turns our thoughts to the Lord. But more than this, it makes Him a joyful center, a delightful hub, as it were, around which all creation moves in harmony.

"When once the gaze is fixed upon Him, the life finds its center."¹⁰

This, in essence, was what our friend, the medical doctor, shared with me as a prescription. It is the true Sabbath-keeping philosophy. With a few alterations, my wife and I now use it in helping people who are in dire need, and call it the "Ten-point Program for Nerves."

When, a few months after we had visited with Gail in her city, she drove two hundred fifty miles to come see us, we knew that providence had sent her. She had volunteered to help us with some manuscripts that we hoped to have published soon. We rented a room for Gail right next to ours, and it was not long before the Lord directed the conversation in the line where His Holy Spirit could use us.

One day when Gail felt particularly relaxed and confidential she said, "I'm so tired of it all; I'd just like to lie down and die! More than once I've decided life isn't worth living. As far as I'm concerned, life is just one big disappointment."

Here was Gail, a lady with her master's degree in the field of counselling! If anyone should have been equipped to face life and analyze it, surely it was she, but she was totally frustrated. She was a Christian, after the order of things, and yet Christianity had not brought joy and confidence into her life. Life had been a great disappointment to Gail. She had given so much, it seemed, but had been given so little in return.

It was then that I reviewed with Gail my own frustrating experience, my nerve exhaustion, and my complete change and healing in just three days.

Gail listened. I shared with her the ten-point program that a doctor had suggested to me. I told Gail that this simple program had been prescribed by the Great Physician centuries before, and it had been placed in His manual, the Bible, for happy, delightful living.

"It is so simple," I said, "that it is difficult to imagine that it could be so effective. The fact that it has effected a cure in the lives of so many testifies to its power." Then sitting tall in my chair, with my eyes sparkling, and tingling with the thrill of being able to share this wonderful formula for happiness and joy, I said, "Now, Gail, I want to share this with you. I know it will do wonders for you too. Here it is: Make a list of ten things each morning—for ten days—of things for which you are, or should be, thankful. Write them on a small piece of paper and carry that piece of paper with you all day. Often throughout the day take out that piece of paper and repeat out loud, if possible, these ten things for which you are thankful."

"But what kinds of things are you talking about?" Gail asked with great interest.

"Well, the first day the list might include:

1. Air
2. Light
3. Sight
4. Jesus
5. The Bible
6. Forgiveness
7. Salvation
8. Cleansing
9. Husband
10. Hearing

"Then put each of these words into a sentence, like this:

1. 'Thank You, Lord, for air.'
2. 'Thank You, Lord, for light.'
3. 'Thank You, Lord, for sight.'
4. 'Thank You, Lord, for Jesus,' and so on down the list."

I shared with Gail how I had used this to such great advantage. I told her that the secret to success in this program was to *say* these sentences out loud. Something happens when thanks is uttered. The mind and spirit find healing. When oral repetition is not appropriate, the next best thing is to say them over in the mind. It is good to say these things for which we are thankful, perhaps every half hour, so that a schedule can be set up.

Then I shared with Gail that the items themselves that appear on the list are not of prime importance. "Write down anything that comes to your mind," I suggested. "For example, your list might end like this:

8. 'Thank You, Lord, for bones to keep me together.'
9. 'Thank You, Lord, for flesh on my bones.'
10. 'Thank you, Lord, for skin.'

"On the fourth day we might thank God for all the diseases we do *not* have:

1. Tuberculosis
2. Cancer
3. Leprosy
5. etc.

"If you find it hard to recall blessings for which to be thankful, open the dictionary, and you'll find scores—hundreds of things—for which to be thankful."

Gail sat there all this time just listening. Suddenly she said, "But why resort to this kind of therapy? I'm generally a cheerful person."

"So was I," I replied, "but I still had nervous exhaustion." Then I went on to explain that we, as a human race, have become degenerate, so unthankful that our foolish hearts are darkened.¹¹ That's why we must educate our minds to be thankful. It will not come naturally. We must put forth all our energies to be grateful.

"Let us educate our hearts and lips to speak the praise of God for His matchless love."¹²

If we will follow this simple program, "no tongue can express, no finite mind can conceive, the blessings that result from appreciating the goodness and love of God."¹³

It is as much a moral duty to be thankful as it is to pray.

Gail spent three days with us. She had come to discuss a manuscript with us, but we had spent the time in discussing the therapy of joy and the importance of faith, hope, and love. We had practically no discussion of the manuscript, but the time was spent, I felt, in a more profitable way.

On the last morning that Gail was with us, she was having a little trouble making her list of ten things for which to be thankful. Seeing a cat outside the door, she said, "I've got it! Thank You, Lord, for the cat. The cat has nine lives so that makes ten things!"

Gail was a little skeptical about the ten-point program. Her education didn't accept this simple program. How could anything so simple work? But because of her respect for us, and because it had helped me so much, Gail decided she would put it to a test. She had nothing to lose, and besides she was leaving, and if it didn't work we wouldn't know about it. So, with an expression of gratefulness to us for the time we had spent together and for the help she had received, Gail bade us good-bye and promised to test the program.

Just two weeks later, we moved to another city, a little closer to where Gail lived. She came to see us. We were holding a series of meetings in the local church. Gail entered the church, along with the other worshipers, and sat down. I had to look a second time before I recognized her! Her whole countenance had

changed! I just could not believe my eyes. Was this the same lady we had seen just two weeks ago?

As soon as the service was over and I greeted the people at the door, I found Gail. I wanted to hear the story! My wife felt the same as I did, and a mutual friend had already invited Gail to come home with us for lunch.

While dinner was being prepared, I could wait no longer. Turning to Gail, I said, "Gail, what has happened since we saw you last? You don't look the same. You look wonderful!"

"Well, it's really very simple. I went home to my school. As you know, I'm teaching some rather unruly children. I thought if this program will work for me, it will work for my children too. If it doesn't work for them, I decided it wouldn't work for me. So I put the ten-point program to a test for my entire classroom. I offered a special prize to each child who would bring a list of ten things for which he or she was thankful each day until school closes. There are twelve weeks of school left. When you multiply twelve weeks by five days by ten things each day, you know how long a list these children will have!"

Gail did not ask the children to go over their lists as she and I had done. All they were to do was to bring the new list each day. But in just two weeks the program was paying huge dividends, to herself and to the children. The classroom was changed.

"And I feel wonderful! I just never realized how powerful a simple little program like this could be," Gail said, still beaming.

Gail later sent us a most glowing report of the changed atmosphere in the school. Problem children became near honor students. Happiness, joy, and gladness chased the tattling away.

Then a bigger surprise came to Gail. The parents began to help the children find and write their lists day by day. Then the parents themselves, some of whom were real "sourpusses," became happy, wholesome, cooperative souls. The school and the church became almost a little heaven on earth.

Why? How did this happen? What was the reason for the change? The thinking pattern of the people, the children, and their teacher was changed. Instead of focusing on the negative side of life, they began to think thankfully, hopefully, cheerfully. It is a demonstration of the philosophy found in Proverbs 23:7, which says, "As he thinketh in his heart, so is he."

Over the past several years we have heard from Gail on a number of occasions. The picture remains the same—hopeful, cheerful, and happy.

"There are no more ugly clouds in my sky. I haven't a single unsolved problem in the world," wrote Gail. "Now I'm really happy," she says without a moment's hesitation.

The letters keep coming, each one a glowing testimony to the power of the

program. In one letter she said, "This is your contribution to life. Please don't lose any more time in getting this information to people everywhere. It's the most important and valuable information from the Word of God that I have yet received. Share it!"

And that's why I'm sharing it with you now. Does it sound too simple for you to try? I don't blame you for being skeptical, but I challenge you to try it—*just* for three days! You, too, will realize the power of a thankful heart. When the heart is thankful, it can't be unhappy.

A happy heart is better than any medicine or pill you can find. Go ahead—be happy—you have a right to!

Dear Lord in heaven, Thou hast promised that in Thy presence there is fullness of joy.¹⁴ We ask that this joy may flow into the hearts and lives of the readers of this book. We believe that Thou art standing at the door of the heart offering "joy and peace in believing."¹⁵ And we receive the answer in dear Jesus' name. Amen.

STORM'S RAINBOW

Threat'ning is the morning sky;
Sad the cooing of the doves.
Darkness gathers; hear the cry—
No one cares and no one loves.

Missionless and purposeless
Is the life without our Lord;
There is only emptiness
Where no harmonies accord.

Then, ah, then, man lifts his eyes
To a hope that wakes the heart;
There's a rainbow in the skies,
Bringing man another start.

"I forgive you," speaks a voice;
I will build the life of man.
You may sing! You may rejoice!
You may find new hope again.

Reflection: As we conclude the thrilling account of this chapter, we strongly recommend that you not merely review the seven great Bible facts following but

also start practicing the ten-point program that was used of our Lord to bring healing to Gail.

1. When our Lord made this world, "the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy" (Job 38:7).

2. We are exhorted to "declare his works with rejoicing" (Psalm 107:22).

3. Thus He "made his wonderful works to be remembered" (Psalm 111:4).

4. The holy worship day is the memorial of His wonderful created works (Exodus 20:8-11).

5. We are exhorted to "worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness," "Let the heavens rejoice, and let the earth be glad. . . . Let the field be joyful, and all that is therein" (Psalm 96:9, 11, 12).

6. The merry heart is like a medicine, and the "joy of the Lord is . . . [our] strength" (Proverbs 17:22; Nehemiah 8:10).

7. God promises to draw near with His life-giving presence as we rejoice in Him (Zechariah 2:10; Philippians 4:4-7).

References:

1. Psalm 16:11.
2. James 1:2, 3; Romans 5:3, 4.
3. Psalm 118:24.
4. Job 38:6, 7.
5. See Genesis 2:1-3; Exodus 20:8-11; Psalm 111:4; Psalm 107:22.
6. Jeremiah 10:10-12.
7. Proverbs 17:22.
8. Nehemiah 8:10.
9. Hosea 13:9.
10. *Education*, p. 297.
11. See Romans 1:21.
12. *The Ministry of Healing*, p. 253.
13. *Ibid.*
14. See Psalm 16:11.
15. Romans 15:13.

13

"Packerism"

As the Creator transforms one into His own image, Packerists will find it impossible to appreciate or even understand.

"Alfred Packer Devours Five Of His Companions."

It actually happened. Packer was a cannibal. He lived about one hundred years ago. But this "headhunter" was not a native of Borneo or Africa. He lived in our own United States.

My wife and I were traveling through the beautiful state of Colorado. It is the highest state in the Union with an average altitude of 6800 feet. It has 52 of the nation's highest mountains. It has 1500 peaks over 10,000 feet, and the highest lake in the 48 contiguous states. The Continental Divide runs through the state in a north-south direction. We decided to take a spin down to the Royal Gorge, where we were intrigued with its grandness, its beauty, and its marvelous 800-foot span.

We observed a paper on the stand, "The Royal Gorge Gazette" and paid our quarter and then sat down and scanned it as we took the "incline to the bottom of the gorge."

It was in this paper that we read the hideous account of Packer, who ate five men—buddies of his, if you please. It seemed almost unbelievable. Yet Packer was finally arrested, tried, and found guilty. When before sentencing the judge

permitted Packer to make a statement, he said that the sweetest flesh he had ever eaten was the breast of man.

We shudder. His crime, as shocking as it was, is overshadowed by his apparent lack of repentance even after the court had convicted him. The enormity of his guilt made no impression, so far as we could learn, on this beast in human form.

In this chapter we apply the label "Packerism" to all forms of selfish advantage taken of another.

Our Lord has a moral code of conduct.¹ In the center of this law is the fourth commandment. This commandment is not merely the center of morality; it contains the key to morality, namely the creative power of our God.² Only as man receives a new heart by virtue of our Lord's creative power can he be safe from "Packerism" in one form or another under all circumstances and conditions.³ He will devour others, either by gossip, selfish business deals, or physical violence.

The great apostle Paul wrote, "What man knoweth the things of a man, save the spirit of man which is in him? even so the things of God knoweth no man, but the Spirit of God."⁴ What a mighty statement!

The apostle continues, "Now we have received, not the spirit of the world, but the spirit which is of God; that we might know the things that are freely given to us of God."⁵ May the Holy Spirit bless us as we give earnest heed to this statement. Paul then climaxes this thought with these words: "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God; for they are foolishness unto him; neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."⁶

There we have it: Only as the Holy Spirit creates in man the new birth, and only as man continues to be a new creature in Christ Jesus, can he understand and appreciate God's morality. Jesus declared, "Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."⁷ At another time He said, "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."⁸ How can one see God or live a completely "at-heart" moral life without the new birth? He cannot.

It is because the unconverted heart cannot understand the born-again Christian that "a man's foes shall be they of his own household." This is why a son will be "at variance against his father, and the daughter against her mother, and the daughter in law against her mother in law."⁹ No, the unconverted heart cannot harmonize with Christ, His kingdom, or its principles. For the spiritually minded followers of Christ to turn from their relationship with the Lord in order to find peace through compromise is to deny Christ and all that His spiritual kingdom stands for. Jesus said, "He that loveth father or mother more than me is not worthy of me: and he that loveth son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. And he that taketh not his cross, and followeth after me is not worthy of

me. He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it."¹⁰

Alfred Packer is an example of the natural man's not appreciating the high standards of morality.

We understand that recently a group of moderns "exonerated" Packer for his misdeeds. Why? Because the natural man cannot appreciate spiritual standards of moral conduct beyond a certain point. Even men who are outwardly circumspect may, like Packer, be at heart vicious monsters. The apostle Paul, before his conversion, was outwardly blameless. But he was a murderer of the worst sort. We have been in lands where there appears to be a strict kind of morality; but when certain events transpire, the real nature of the unconverted man comes out like that of a devouring lion.

The unity, the fellowship, which our Maker brings is not a *conforming* harmony. It is a *transforming* unity. The apostle Paul contrasted the two in these words: "Be not conformed to this world; but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God."¹¹ If you will observe once again this text of Scripture, you will see that it is stating a great truth. It declares that in order to prove what is "that good, and acceptable, and perfect, will of God" we must be "transformed." There is no shortcut. Harmony and unity based on any other foundation is superficial, unstable. In time someone is sure to devour another.¹²

Take Mrs. Cole and Gerald Dell for example. Mr. Dell was a Christian businessman. Mrs. Cole was a sensuous, unstable, untrustworthy woman. Yet one day Mrs. Cole began a whispering campaign against Mr. Dell.

After several months of this low-keyed gossip, it came to the attention of Mr. Dell. Mr. Dell opened his ledger and spread out the facts before Mrs. Cole. There they were in black and white. Mr. Dell was happy, in his heart, that he could thus satisfy Mrs. Cole and bring to an end her unworthy and untrue gossip throughout the community.

But Mr. Dell was in for a disappointment. No fact convinced Mrs. Cole. No explanation, though backed up with the clearest evidence, changed Mrs. Cole's mind.

Mr. Dell and Mrs. Cole belonged to a Christian church. They were often found in the same sanctuary. But their standards were hemispheres apart.

Mr. Dell prayed much to be able to help Mrs. Cole, but in vain. Why? Because her own heart was unable to credit another as being more unselfish than she. Later Mrs. Cole herself left the community under a cloud of moral turpitude. Like Alfred Packer, she devoured others, only later to be exposed for what she really was.

If it seems incredible that an unworthy character should put forth every effort

to demean a righteous businessman, take a look at the religious nation of Christ's day. After three years of ceaseless acts of mercy, of forgiveness, and of love on the part of Christ, a group of religious people cried out, "Away with him." They wagged their heads at Him and spat upon Him. They placed a wreath of long Palestinian thorns on His brow. As one wretch smote Him on the crown, the thorns pierced His temples. Blood trickled down His holy brow and dropped on the pavement below. They chose to release one of the most vicious murderers, actually a notorious gangster, in place of the pure Lamb of God.

Why? Because "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."¹³ This is Packerism.

This helps us to understand why in the last days of human history he "whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness" is able to attract many to his banner "because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion, that they should believe a lie: that they all might be damned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."¹⁴ "Packerism" is selfishness at work in destroying others.

On the other hand there are those who are not deceived, whose hearts have received "salvation through sanctification of the Spirit and belief of the truth."¹⁵ It will require this divine sanctification to fit God's faithful ones to pass successfully through the coming "mark-of-the-beast" persecution.¹⁶ But having His Spirit, they can claim the promise of Isaiah 54:17, that no weapon formed against them will prosper.

The natural man cannot understand Christ-centered ones. Yet at the same time he may consider himself very wise in raising skeptical questions. Every now and then some individual comes to us and asks, "Where did God come from?"

We sometimes give such a questioner two examples of the inability of man to so much as *begin* to understand this truth. The lesser is that of my own study of algebra. We were studying under a teacher who was not well-versed in the subject. He sometimes worked on a problem for hours without success. One evening he struggled with me on algebra for the whole study period without solving so much as one problem. It was not the fault of algebra. It was the fault of his and my own mind.

The more appropriate example of man's lack of capacity to know God might be that of a dog. If you were to give a dog music lessons for twenty years, why could he not read the notes? The answer is simple. His mind is not capable of understanding the notes. One might explain a thousand times to the dog every

rudiment and truth about the bars and measures of music, but without success.

The fact that an unbelieving, unchristian mate cannot understand spiritual things and therefore persecutes the other does not, however, give license to the Christian mate to descend to the use of carnal weapons, such as argument, belittling, or retaliation. The Christian may at times be attempting an impossibility in trying to indoctrinate the unspiritual mate.

Why? Because as we have seen, "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God." The Christian solution is to manifest a humble and meek attitude. Saith the Scriptures, "Likewise, ye wives, be in subjection to your own husbands; that, if any obey not the word, they also may *without the word* be won by the conversation [behavior] of the wives."¹⁷ "Packerism" is not cured by debate, denunciation, or forced instruction.

No amount of argument has ever brought harmony. The unconverted mate may be won *without the word*, or without a word, by his observing a "meek and quiet spirit" in you. You cannot argue him into a new life, but you can reach him through your example. Outward adorning won't do it.¹⁸ And to employ "Packerism" to cure "Packerism" doesn't work either.

Again, what will convert the unchristian mate? "Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing." "That, whereas they speak evil of you, as of evildoers, they may be ashamed that falsely accuse your good conversation [behavior] in Christ."¹⁹

It was not the *sermon* of the martyr Stephen that was the beginning of the conversion of Saul, the persecutor. It was his *behavior*. Saul was holding the garments of those who stoned Stephen when that man of God "kneeled down, and cried with a loud voice, Lord, lay not this sin to their charge. And when he had said this, he fell asleep."²⁰ The Holy Spirit used Stephen's shining behavior to convict Saul and begin the process which would transform him into the apostle Paul.

How foolish for professed Christians to seek harmony either through compromise with the world or through argument, controversy, or unwanted instruction! True unity, we emphasize, comes not through conformation but rather through spiritual *transformation*.

As stated earlier, we are not called to denounce those who misunderstand us. The crucified Christ did not engage in vituperatives. Neither did His martyr Stephen. Both asked the Father to forgive their murderers.

And their prayers were answered in a marvelous way. Some time after Pentecost "a great company of priests were obedient to the faith."²¹ And not long after Stephen's death, Saul the persecutor "fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me?"²² What a marvel-

ous conversion! To understand that the way to win others to unity is by transformation of life rather than by compromise of conscience is of the utmost importance.

Yet in avoiding the one extreme, let us not fall into the opposite error; namely, a temptation to assume that all who misunderstand us are unconverted. This is not necessarily so. Human communication is faulty, unreliable.

Have you perhaps, played the game gossip? At one end of the line a person whispers a sentence into the ear of the one standing next to him. No one else can hear what is whispered in that ear. That one in turn whispers the same sentence to the next one in line. And he to the next and so on down the line. Each one repeats as nearly as possible the exact words that he thought he heard. One day I united with a group in playing this game. At one end of the line I whispered, "It has been raining hard today." By the time it had been repeated several times it came out at the other end of the line, "Cecil Maynard is here today." Yet everyone repeated word for word what he thought he heard. Cecil Maynard was one of the men playing the game.

The Word of God gives us no excuse for engaging in "Packerism" or in using carnal weapons to combat it; rather it states positive rules of Christian communication and conduct. Some of these follow:

1. It is not given us to determine the spiritual status of another. Jesus made this clear in His parable of the wheat and the tares. After the farmer had sowed wheat an enemy sowed tares. As the tares sprang up in the wheat, the servants asked the owner of the field if they should go out into the field and pluck up the tares. But the owner of the farm replied, "Nay: lest while ye gather up the tares, ye root up also the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest: and in the time of harvest I will say to the reapers, Gather ye together first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them: but gather the wheat into my barn."²³

An example of the difficulty of determining whether a professed Christian is genuine is that of Judas.

Judas, had he died before the last journey to Jerusalem, would have probably gone down in history as a great church leader, a spiritual giant for God. Yet all the while he was at heart a traitor. His real character did not surface until the last night before the crucifixion of Christ. Jesus did not expose him, however, during those three years. Yet Jesus knew, as He said, "Have not I chosen you twelve, and one of you is a devil?"

On the other hand, Peter, who denied his Master with cursing and swearing, came through like pure gold and preached the sermon on the Day of Pentecost. Aren't you glad that the responsibility for judging character is not left with us? "The Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son"²⁴ "Let us not therefore judge one another any more: but judge this rather, that no

man put a stumblingblock or an occasion to fall in his brother's way."²⁵

2. If we do engage in the judging of motives, we may ourselves come up "weighed and wanting." This is because of the fact that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God." Therefore when we see a mote in our brother's eye, it may be because a "beam" of selfishness is in our own eye.²⁶

3. If we think our brother has done wrong, we are not to tell others. Rather we are to "tell him his fault between thee and him alone."²⁷ "Debate thy cause with thy neighbour himself; and discover not a secret to another."²⁸ To tell others first is to be guilty of talebearing. "Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people."²⁹ "A talebearer revealeth secrets: but he that is of a faithful spirit concealeth the matter."³⁰ "Where no wood is, there the fire goeth out: so where there is no talebearer, the strife ceaseth."³¹ "He that repeateth a matter separateth very friends."³² "A froward man soweth strife: and a whisperer separateth chief friends."³³

4. When we go to talk things over with an individual who we think has wronged us, we are to follow carefully this instruction: "Ye which are spiritual, restore such an one in the spirit of meekness."³⁴ "He that is slow to anger appeaseth strife."³⁵ "The meek will he guide in judgment: the meek will he teach his way."³⁶ "The discretion of a man deferreth his anger: and it is his glory to pass over a transgression."³⁷

5. For church councils and committees of consultation as well as for individuals, we have this instruction: "Let nothing be done through strife or vainglory: but in lowliness of mind let each esteem other better than themselves."³⁸

For an individual to cling to his own opinion where personal judgment is involved against the united judgment of his brethren can be disastrous to his spiritual life. We must never forget that at one time Lucifer was "perfect." But of him the Word of God declares, "Thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness."³⁹ I think we do no violence to the text when we state that it does not pay to be too "bright" thinking our judgment is superior to that of the united wisdom of our peers. This can corrupt both our own wisdom and our spiritual life.

Lucifer's attitude was "I will ascend."⁴⁰ But Jesus states that the one who exalts self will eventually be abased.⁴¹ Therefore it does not pay to be conscience for others or a spiritual know-it-all.

During one of our series of meetings a lay preacher came to our motel room. He wanted to share a problem. He had been a member of his church council. And in a certain matter that came before the group he ventilated his opinions but was voted down. Again when the matter came before the whole congregation in a regular business meeting, he was voted down once more.

He had a perfect right to share his opinions—in fact, probably a duty, for he

was an elected officer of that church. But then he decided to try to gather to his side every member of the church possible and thus force the church to rescind its action. In doing so he endeavored to destroy the influence of the most faithful church leaders. He was guilty of "Packerism."

In a show of deep sincerity he came to seek our sympathy and backing. When he was through with his story, he asked me, "What would you do were you in my place?" To help make more certain that I would side with him, he gave me a little rundown of his abilities and capabilities. He told how he had been invited to speak in several churches of the area for many years. He had also been a local elder of that church for two full decades.

When he asked for my opinion, I prayerfully answered that I was not absolutely sure what I *would* do. This is because the Bible says, "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."⁴² But I offered to share with him what I *should* do. The Bible says to confess our faults to one another.⁴³ I knew that there was to be a meeting at the church that very afternoon. I pointed out that, even though he had done right in stating his convictions both in the church council and the church business meeting, yet his activities leading to disunity after this were improper. He had set out to belittle and destroy the godly guardians of the church. Therefore, I suggested that, since the whole church knew of his disuniting activities, he might ask for a few moments of time that very afternoon and apologize before the church. Thus his page would be white once more, and the Lord could bless him in his Christian life.

Like the rich young ruler who came to Christ and went away sorrowfully, this elder hung his head saying, "I have not come to that place in my Christian experience yet."

This man had come to the place where he could speak fluently on various doctrines of the Bible, but he had not learned the first principles of Christian harmony.

6. In considering what might be the basis for others' apparent unkind attitudes toward us, we should study most carefully to learn whether we ourselves have failed to observe the simple principles of harmony.

For example, Lucy, a teen-age girl, came to us while we were holding a series of meetings at a boarding school. Lucy was extremely in earnest. She had a problem with another girl in the school, and the apparent alienation existing between them brought tears to Lucy's eyes. She wanted desperately to iron out the differences. So she sought our aid. It might be, Lucy suggested, that we could say something publicly that would open the other girl's eyes and help her to change her ways so harmony could be restored.

"This girl," Lucy began, "is in the dormitory. She wants to be a friend of mine. And we were friends for a while. Now I have cooled off toward her, and

she cannot understand why. She comes into my room and, without so much as asking, takes one of my dresses out of the closet or my shoes—anything she wants. Then she goes around the school with my clothes on and wonders why I have cooled off toward her. Pastor Coon, will you please tell the kids not to take things from others' rooms which do not belong to them! I want to be friends with this girl, but I cannot warm up to her when she does not recognize the simple principles of integrity."

Lucy's dormitory friend was not eating her as Alfred Packer did, but she was devouring her things. It is the same basic principle of not recognizing simple morality even though the manner in which it manifests itself is different from that of Alfred Packer.

Recently we were in conversation with a Christian businessman. During our visit we discussed Christian business ethics, particularly in the area of paying accounts promptly. This gentleman gave us some amazing information. He spoke of several Christians who were store managers who made it a practice not to pay their current obligations for two or three months unless a penalty was attached. In discussing this principle with one of our teammates, she said that in a business school she attended it was made clear that this is often the practice of unscrupulous businessmen. You cannot put your finger on this as dishonest. Neither do you want to point it out to these businessmen for fear they will close out their dealings with you and give others their business. So it leaves the honest small businessman in the middle of a situation where certain professed Christians are less Christian in their business dealings than are many who make no profession of Christianity.

Is it any wonder that the church is so powerless! Can we expect the Holy Spirit to be poured out in a desired unity which ignores Christian business ethics? Can such principles be blessed by our heavenly Father? Can Jesus bless with His presence those who, while professing the name of our Lord, ignore the simplest principles of Christian conduct in business dealings? Can we blame a fellow Christian for pulling away from a superficial call to harmony by Christians who practice financial cannibalism—"Packerism"? If any of our readers have engaged in shady business dealings, why not apologize and make restitution?

If you are guilty of "Packerism," won't you fall on your knees with us and pray?

Dear Lord, how unworthy am I to approach Thee. But I come through the Lord Jesus. I ask Thee to fulfill Thy promise to deliver me from this devilish disease of destructive criticism. I believe Thee, because it is "impossible for God to lie."⁴⁴ And I thank Thee that I have now received deliverance from that demonic spirit that devours men, even those more righteous than myself. In Jesus' name. Amen.

PACKERISM

Packerism oft devours
Sincere Christians who confide
In this monster—vicious beast—
Who is walking by their side.

He is gloating that their breast
Soon will serve a sumptuous meal;
Yet his words of fun and jest
Oft obscure his hellish zeal.

Christians, no antipathy
Cherish toward this cannibal;
Theirs is but the simple plea
That their love his lust will heal.

Sinful greedy selfish man
Cannot understand the pure;
He has followed Satan's plan.
Neither been in Christ secure.

To your knees, then, Christian friend,
That our Lord will give new hearts.
Thus may "Packerism" end,
Felled by heaven's love-tipped darts.

Reflection: In the chapter just finished you behold most briefly the great controversy between Christ and Satan. You may wish to study carefully the following seven great facts. Then go through the chapter and review them.

As we conclude this chapter we present seven great Bible facts:

1. From Genesis, chapter one, through to the last book of the Bible, our Lord is pictured as the Creator (Genesis 1:1; Revelation 21:1).
2. Satan, on the other hand, is pictured as the destroyer (Hebrews 2:14, 15).
3. Satan was not merely the first liar; he was the first murderer too (John 8:44).
4. Christ, the Creator, is life and "truth" (1 John 5:12; John 1:1-3; 14:6).
5. Satan's followers can be so deceived that they will lie about and kill God's faithful followers (Matthew 5:11; John 16:2).

6. To protect His children, the same Spirit that "moved on the face of the waters" at Creation's dawn is promised to bring comfort and guidance to His faithful children (Genesis 1:2; John 16:7, 13).

7. The reason why people cannot understand the spiritual motives of His children is that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned" (1 Corinthians 2:14).

- 39. Ezekiel 28:15, 17.
- 40. Isaiah 14:13.
- 41. See Matthew 23:12.
- 42. 1 Corinthians 10:12.
- 43. See James 5:16.
- 44. Hebrews 6:18.

References:

- 1. See Exodus 20:3-17.
- 2. See Exodus 20:8-11.
- 3. See Ezekiel 36:26, 27.
- 4. 1 Corinthians 2:11.
- 5. 1 Corinthians 2:12.
- 6. 1 Corinthians 2:14.
- 7. John 3:3.
- 8. Matthew 5:8.
- 9. Matthew 10:36, 35.
- 10. Matthew 10:37-39.
- 11. Romans 12:2.
- 12. See Galatians 5:15.
- 13. 1 Corinthians 2:14.
- 14. 2 Thessalonians 2:9-12.
- 15. 2 Thessalonians 2:13.
- 16. See Revelation 13:13-17; Daniel 12:1-3.
- 17. 1 Peter 3:1.
- 18. See 1 Peter 3:2, 3.
- 19. 1 Peter 3:9, 16.
- 20. Acts 7:60; see Acts 22:20.
- 21. Acts 6:7.
- 22. Acts 9:4.
- 23. Matthew 13:29, 30.
- 24. John 5:22.
- 25. Romans 14:13.
- 26. See Matthew 7:3-5.
- 27. Matthew 18:15.
- 28. Proverbs 25:9.
- 29. Leviticus 19:16.
- 30. Proverbs 11:13.
- 31. Proverbs 26:20.
- 32. Proverbs 17:9.
- 33. Proverbs 16:28.
- 34. Galatians 6:1.
- 35. Proverbs 15:18.
- 36. Psalm 25:9.
- 37. Proverbs 19:11.
- 38. Philippians 2:3.

14

Divine Delight

Teaching others the rare delights of worship.

Mrs. Conscience, a young woman of less than thirty years of age, had two lovely children. Being a very honest-hearted woman and a Sabbath keeper too, Mrs. Conscience came to my wife and me with a problem.

"You people," began Mrs. Conscience, "have been able to train your children so that they are in the church now. I want some counsel in how to train my children so that when they grow up they will be in the church too. Will you please tell me what to do?"

I felt a quick pain in my soul as she spoke. True, our two children were both in the church. They are Christians and Sabbath keepers.

But I wondered if perhaps this might have happened in spite of me, rather than because of any special thing I had done.

While I was pondering whether to apologize for our faults or to say something to satisfy this lady, my wife gave a few helpful suggestions. By this time I had regained my presence of mind, but just as I was about to speak, Mrs. Conscience came right to the point.

"Take the Sabbath, for instance," she said. "I feel that the Sabbath is a different day, sacred. Children should put away their everyday toys on that day."

It might be that Mrs. Conscience and husband had some difference of opinion on the matter. I do not know. Perhaps he felt that it would be proper for little children to continue with their toys on the Sabbath, while his wife saw things quite differently. I pondered these possibilities as I answered.

"Yes, the Sabbath is a different day," I quickly replied. "But in what way is it different?" Then answering my own question, I added, "It is *delightfully* different, for the Lord says, 'Call the sabbath a delight.'"

Then I went on to explain. "In other words, in order for the Sabbath to have the right effect on the minds of the children, Friday afternoon about sunset you might say something like this to the children, 'Children, now that the Sabbath is coming, we are going to put away the little toys of the week, for we have some *big, delightful* Sabbath toys!'

"Then have all ready their special Sabbath toys—for just that one day. You might have a sandbox, for instance, with large cutouts of the three Hebrew children in the fiery furnace, or Daniel in the lions' den, or Peter in prison, or perhaps Jesus walking on the water. When the Sabbath is approaching, welcome it with joy and delight.

"The psychology of Sabbath keeping will have such a telling effect on the children that they will not begin to associate it with boredom. This will stop Satan dead in his tracks."

Mrs. Conscience stood speechless. She had thought only of duty, conviction, and obedience. She had never thought of the law of association or of Sabbath psychology—God's psychology!

She had never thought of how children hate a rule that is applied like a whip. Whip the child with a wrong Sabbath psychology and he will probably hate the Sabbath. Yes, he will wait—until he gets old enough. Then he will turn from it. This is a natural reaction to a negative approach to God's things.

Mrs. Conscience thanked us for the advice and assured us that she would endeavor to put it into practice.

We are not merely to obey God, but we are to obey God *in God's way*. We are to call the Sabbath a *delight*! We are to teach our children that worship is beautiful, not just a duty. We are to suggest to our children that all of God's created things are good, lovely—in their own ways—and to be desired. True happiness is found in *good*! To combine the thought of obedience with the thought of pleasure is *biblical*!

No, we are not to teach people to do things just because they bring pleasure. We are commanded by our Lord, however, that we are to equate God's things with joy.

"In thy presence is fulness of joy: at thy right hand there are pleasures for evermore."²

A very sad mother came to us. Her son, now married and a medical doctor, had fallen in love with another woman. His wife was in tears. His home was about to be broken.

"Pastor, will you please go over and see my Bob?" was her tearful request. "Bob is a good boy. He grew up in the Sabbath School, went to church school, and never caused me any trouble. Please see him."

I could see that Mrs. Robinson felt that some temporary difficulty had evidently discouraged Bob and set his feet to backsliding. Mrs. Robinson thought that just a visit or two from me would change the whole picture for her Bob and for his family.

I did go to see Bob. However, when I got there, I discovered that the problem was much bigger than either she or I had imagined. It might be compared to a mother's calling a doctor for her child to find out what the child's trouble is when the child has become unconscious and is already in a coma. The chances of immediate cure looked very slim. Recovery, if at all, would be exceedingly slow.

I discovered, after visiting with Bob for some time, that while he was a very fine-appearing fellow, his attitude toward religion, the Sabbath, and the church were decidedly negative—and deep-seated.

"I made my decision to leave the church when I was nine years old," Bob began frankly. "I would go to church and to Sabbath School because I had to. But I made up my mind that when I got big enough I would no longer be a member of the church."

He then went on to explain that, as far as his parents knew, he was a model child. But they could not probe his mind. They did not understand the psychology they had used.

Every time we use religion as a whip, we may be causing the one upon whom we are using it to hate religion. Every time we use the motive of duty without delight, conviction without cheer, holiness without happiness, we are doing exactly what Satan desires. He is determined to make it appear that the Christian pathway is a pilgrimage of sighs. If he can succeed in doing this, he knows the kind of reaction many individuals will have.

The brewers know this. The tobacco manufacturers understand it too. They use the law of pleasant association to sell their product. And effectively! The difficulty is that they have the right psychology but the wrong product. Mrs. Robinson had the wrong psychology but the right product—or did she?

Did she have the *right product* when she advanced the Sabbath without a Saviour of joy? Did she have the *right product* when she enforced doctrine—without delight? Did she properly equate our wonderful Saviour with His truth?

There are two different ways by which a person can fail to equate religion with delight. One is to make it all duty and conviction. The other is to love the world

so much that the children have equated the world with pleasure because their parents have. Permissiveness is as bad as arbitrariness.

Pleasure-loving worldlings are scarcely in a position to equate Jesus with joy. "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."³ The World family did this.

Mr. World was careless of the Sabbath. He and Mrs. World tuned in to TV after sundown on Friday night. They listened and watched, whiling away the hours of the Sabbath. It gave them pleasure, thus equating Sabbath laxity with pleasure.

Mr. and Mrs. World also went to the movies and took their children with them. In church they heard that we are not to frequent these places. But the pictures gave a sense of pleasure. So their children equated the church standards with pain, displeasure, sadness, and a "don't" religion.

Chances are that the men who spoke against these things in the church spoke with real conviction and a face that showed pain and a voice that was rather sharp. So the children equated standards with something unpleasant and the movies and Sabbath TV watching as something pleasant. Little by little, almost imperceptibly, Mr. and Mrs. World were forming an association in their children's minds which would be most difficult to erase in coming years. The speaker in the church service unwittingly did the very same thing. One augmented the other.

Now, friend, you may have noticed Sabbath-keeping churches equating the things of Jesus with joy. In His "presence is fulness of joy."⁴

We are beginning to learn some very vital lessons connected with God's holy things. Listen to what one minister had to teach a group of people who needed more than repentance. They needed the joy of the Saviour.

"For all the people wept, when they heard the words of the law. Then he said unto them, Go your way, eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send portions unto them for whom nothing is prepared: for this day is holy unto our Lord: neither be ye sorry: for the joy of the Lord is your strength."⁵

The people had repented that Sabbath day. This involved weeping. God did not object to this. Repentance is essential to rest in the Lord. But God's servant did not want God's people to return to their places under a cloud of condemnation or sorrow. He instructed them to think of how they could share their blessings with others. And they were to dry their tears and no longer be sorry. God had accepted their sorrow, their tears, and their repentance. Now why be sorry any longer? The day is holy, and in keeping with its holiness continued sorrow is out of place. Your spiritual strength, God says, lies in your happiness—in joyfulness. The same is true today.

Years ago we started a new church. We have done this often throughout our

ministry. We determined that this church would foster the joyful participation of our youth. The teachers or leaders of every division of the Sabbath School seemed to be eager to present to the children a joy and a gladness which would delight their souls. And they succeeded! So interesting, so gladsome, so delightful were their Sabbath School classes, that the children seemed to look forward to them from one Sabbath to another. They wanted to be there. My wife taught in one of these divisions where the joy of the Lord was their strength.

One Sabbath morning a parent called my wife and told her she had a problem. "I don't know what to do," she said. "My little girl is crying because we thought we would attend another church this morning. But it seems that our girl will go to no other Sabbath School. What shall I do?"

The lady may have been perturbed, but we were thrilled. This positive approach of equating religion with joy does something. If the law of association works for industry, it will work for children in the Sabbath School. Sabbath can be made a delight. Sabbath School can be made a joy. When it is, the children will love it! A child loves candy, but hates a whip. A child rejoices in pleasant ways and drags around in dry worship. It's obvious—the logic is simple!

For years, in keeping with God's Sabbath-keeping psychology, I have tried to equate all of God's things, including God's prophets, with joy. I have failed repeatedly. I have not sufficiently attained, but at least I see the light and I am working in that direction. Multitudes of others are too.

When Mr. Perkins tells his boy John that he is a vegetarian because Mr. Black or Mrs. White or Auntie Green says he shouldn't eat pork—I take exception. Do you know why? Because if the boy likes to eat pork, then he will think his father is whipping him with Mr. Black, Mrs. White, or Auntie Green.

We have a right to know the reasons for our actions and decisions, instead of being constantly whipped by some religious speaker or author. To use whip-psychology, even with inspired writing, is not in God's plan. Let us be careful not to use religion as a whip. There is, it is true, a time to rebuke. But our philosophy of life should not be negatively oriented.

We suggest that if there is some "don't" which people want to present in dietary teaching, let them use scientific facts to back up their statements showing at the same time the better procedure. Emphasize the positive. Then people will not feel that they are being continually whipped with the Bible or a Christian teacher. They will not hate God or His prophets.

I have a favorite author who has given me much personal help, perhaps more help than all other authors combined. I am eager for people to read this author for themselves and receive for themselves the positive blessing I have received. That's why I refuse to use these wonderful writings or those of other godly authors as whips.

It takes only good dog sense to know what reaction a whip gives. The better way to present healthful living, for example, is to place major emphasis on the articles of food that are good for us, with minor emphasis on the injurious ones. If I speak of refined white bread as being unhealthful, I should have available some scientific facts on the tremendous advantages to be gained by eating bread that has the vitamins and minerals retained. Thus, instead of people feeling that they are being whipped for eating white bread, they sense that they are being served something much better. Eating the good bread becomes a delight!

So with the doctrines of the Bible. Let us not rest satisfied to play into Satan's hands by whipping people with Bible verses.

If the readers of this chapter could but go into some of the homes we visit and hear the tales of negative experiences these people have had in connection with professed Christians, our readers might ask that a whole book be written on the positives connected with the religion of Jesus Christ. One brief account has to do with a Mrs. Whin. She described the type of religion she found in the church when she was a child. Everyone was supposed to be attired, figuratively, in funeral clothes after Jesus entered a certain room in heaven. Those who have studied the sanctuary question know where some of these sincere people received certain facts. On the Day of Atonement the people were to afflict their souls. On the antitypical day of atonement people are to be in earnest and deeply serious.

But does that mean that ever since the beginning of the antitypical day of atonement no Christian is to be happy? Is that the teaching of God's prophetic Word? Has God suddenly changed from a God of joy to a God of sadness? Has He, with amazing alacrity, become a funeral-director God just because we are in serious times? No! A thousand times, No.

The apostle Paul, in writing to the people of the last days who "know the times and season" and the dark days ahead, placed in the center of First Thessalonians 5 a real challenge. In fact it is more than a challenge—it is a command! What is this command to the people who are looking for the soon return of Jesus? Here it is in verse 15: "Rejoice evermore!"

Lest we overlook the fact that this is the intent of the statement, let us read the eighteenth verse also: "In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you." What is the will of God for people during earth's hectic closing days? It is "in everything give thanks."

When I get up in the morning, I come into the presence of Jesus and ask Him to fill me with His Holy Spirit. I tell Him I adore Him, love Him, and thank Him for His mercy, grace, and every blessing. I walk out into the world with my Jesus in whose "presence is fulness of joy." He declares that at His "right hand there are pleasures for evermore."

The same day that Mrs. Whin related her sad religious experience as a girl, another lady, Mrs. Brown, of the very same city, related her experience as a girl.

"I am sure the church had the 'truth,'" she said. "But it seems that it was not for me." It was one of *negatives*, of *things* more than of *Jesus*; of sadness instead of gladness. I almost wept when I heard her tell of the continual atmosphere of quiet sadness she found among church people.

"It is for you," I replied kindly. "For that philosophy which your particular church had really is not the philosophy of the Bible. It is not the true psychology of the Christ, and it is not what is being practiced in most churches I now know of."

True, there are some who are sighing and mourning as they go toward heaven—or what they think is heaven. There are a few who feel we must have hell now, to be worthy of heaven by and by. It is true that a furnace-affliction type experience comes to every child of God.⁶ Yet God commands, "Count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations." Why? "Knowing this, that the trying of your faith worketh patience."⁷

Yes, we believe the tobacco industry has the right philosophy but the wrong product. Is it possible that some of us Christians have the right product—the correct doctrine—but the wrong philosophy? A tobacco company dares to advertise, "I'd walk a mile" for a certain brand of cigarette that contains poisons that produce cancer. Surely, then, the Christian, who has a pure love of Jesus, should sing in glee and "call the Sabbath a delight,"⁸ because it is delightful!

When a cigarette company can advertise that "when I changed to brand [X], I changed for good," cannot a sinner who has found Christ cry out with holy glee, "I found what I wanted when I found the Lord"?

There are 826 texts of Scripture enjoining, commanding, and teaching us that the Christian's mission is one of rejoicing in the salvation of our Lord. Let us share a few:

"I will greatly rejoice in the Lord, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for he hath clothed me with the garments of salvation, he hath covered me with the robe of righteousness."⁹

"In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you."¹⁰

"Serve the Lord with gladness: come before his presence with singing."¹¹

"For thou, Lord, hast made me glad through thy work: I will triumph in the works of thy hands."¹²

"Be glad in the Lord, and rejoice, ye righteous: and shout for joy, all ye that are upright in heart."¹³

"My soul shall make her boast in the Lord: the humble shall hear thereof, and be glad."¹⁴

"Let them shout for joy, and be glad, that favour my righteous cause: yea, let them say continually, Let the Lord be magnified, which hath pleasure in the prosperity of his servant."¹⁵

"The righteous shall be glad in the Lord, and shall trust in him; and all the upright in heart shall glory."¹⁶

"Receive him [a gospel messenger] therefore in the Lord with all gladness; and hold such in reputation."¹⁷

If a Christian reflects worry, fear, and a philosophy of sadness, he cancels out his witness for Jesus. Therefore, "O magnify the Lord with me, and let us exalt his name together."¹⁸

"O Thou in whose presence my soul takes delight,

On whom in affliction I call,

My comfort by day and my song in the night,

My hope, my salvation, my all!"

Dearest Father, I come to Thee in gladness. I declare Thy works with rejoicing. I pray that my testimony for Jesus may ever be one of a good God, a desirable Saviour, a delightful Lord. I believe that Thou art giving me this joyful Christ-centered witness as promised in John 16:24, and I thank Thee that I now receive it in Thy lovely name. Amen.

A TESTIMONY

Deep is my gratefulness,

Poor my behavior,

Joyful the blessedness

Found in my Saviour.

Reflection: As you meditate on the following seven Scriptures, may the Holy Spirit bless you whether alone, with another, or in a prayer group.

As we conclude this chapter, we invite your attention to the following facts:

1. Our Lord tells us that we are to "call the sabbath a delight" (Isaiah 58:13).
2. In His presence is "fulness of joy" (Psalm 16:11).
3. The whole experience of the Christian is to be one in which he will "rejoice evermore" (1 Thessalonians 5:16).
4. The Bible says we are "in everything" to "give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you" (1 Thessalonians 5:18).
5. The Holy Scriptures command us to "count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations" (James 1:2).
6. This is because the response of joyfulness to temptations and trials works patience (James 1:3).

7. Of those who are ready to meet Jesus at His second coming, the Bible says, "Here is the patience of the saints" (Revelation 14:12).

References:

1. Isaiah 58:13.
2. Psalm 16:11.
3. 1 John 2:15.
4. Psalm 16:11.
5. Nehemiah 8:9, 10.
6. See Isaiah 48:10.
7. James 1:2, 3.
8. Isaiah 58:13.
9. Isaiah 61:10.
10. 1 Thessalonians 5:18.
11. Psalm 100:2.
12. Psalm 92:4.
13. Psalm 32:11.
14. Psalm 34:2.
15. Psalm 35:27.
16. Psalm 64:10.
17. Philippians 2:29.
18. Psalm 34:3.

15 Alma Wanted Out— Then In!

How to associate the right with delight.

"And, pastor, please take my name off the church rolls."

The phone had rung in Pastor Jones's study just as we were ready to leave on our day's itinerary of visits. We were in a series of meetings together, and there were many people who wanted us to visit with them in their home. I could see the concerned look on Pastor Jones's face. Realizing the nature of the call, I stepped out of the room, allowing the pastor the privacy of his office.

It was almost half an hour later when the pastor came to the car where I was waiting for him.

"I just can't figure it out," Pastor Jones said, in apparent desperation.

"Can I be of any help?" I offered.

"Oh, I wish you would," he said in reply, still a little stunned as he thought about the conversation. Pastor Jones then began to reconstruct the telephone conversation. Alma Smith, a young mother of three small children, was engaged in divorce proceedings from her husband John. They were such a nice young couple. But something had obviously gone wrong. Alma thought her first step ought to be to have her name removed from the church roster.

Because of the immediate need, Pastor Jones asked me to accompany him to

the Smith home first. We delayed the other calls and made our way over to see Alma.

We were received graciously. I was impressed with her countenance. She seemed very pleasant, kind, frank, and honest. I had rather pictured in my mind a despondent, sad, joyless creature. The kind that is waiting for some calamity to meet her just around the corner!

While I was trying to figure out this apparent paradox—a beaming personality like this requesting her name to be removed from the church roll—Alma was telling Pastor Jones about her husband's recent accident. I sat and listened, endeavoring to analyze the situation.

Although they were facing divorce, Alma had gone to visit John at the hospital frequently. While he was convalescing, she had volunteered to nurse him back to health.

"I am going through with the divorce," Alma said, "but I wanted to be kind to the poor guy while he was getting better."

My admiration for Alma grew each time she made any comment. I thought to myself, "This lady is not the type that should leave the church. We need hundreds like her. Here is a woman going through with divorce, with a sick husband whom she is befriending. She has a family of little children, yet she has none of the pity-me-please attitude so often apparent in the faces of those going through such an unfortunate experience."

I was so amazed at what I was hearing that, in sheer astonishment, I said, "You aren't the lady who is requesting to have her name removed from the church roll, are you? Surely not!"

When Alma finally got to the point of her telephone call, she revealed no bitterness or resentment. In a businesslike way, blended with friendliness, Alma explained why she had made this unexpected request.

"I was reared," she began, "in a home and in a church where religion was a set of 'don'ts.' I've remained in the church until now, but with all this trouble I just can't stand it any longer. I don't want to belong to a church whose philosophy is 'don't do this' and 'don't do that.' I've heard it all my life, and it seems that with all these other pressures I don't need this one added to it."

Then she went on to elaborate a little more on her inner feelings. It seemed as though she was getting something off her chest which had been there, bothering her, for a long time. "As a child I heard, 'Don't do this; it's the Sabbath.' 'Don't do that; it is still Sabbath.' It seemed to me as though there was a constant stream of don'ts. As I grew older, the don'ts continued." To Alma it all seemed so silly.

"I know what you mean," I said with a smile.

These good people with their don'ts were misrepresenting Jesus. First they were giving Alma the impression that the religion of Christ is mostly negative.

And that is a lie. Then they were giving her the impression that Christianity deals mostly with externals. That is another lie. And then they were giving her the impression, wittingly or unwittingly, that this kind of program saves. And that is a third lie. Alma evidently had been presented with a completely unbalanced picture of Christianity.

Of course there are don'ts. But true Christianity is the most positive, most beautiful, most reasonable philosophy on our planet. Don'ts cannot save. Only the Christ of the Bible can save from either a permissive or a forbidding experience.

Then I pointed out to Alma that Christ, the true Sabbath keeper, does not make the don'ts more prominent than the dos.

"Alma," I continued, "did you know that the fourth commandment dealing with the Sabbath and the fifth commandment dealing with the home do not start with a negative? All the others start with a negative. These are the only two of the ten that start with a positive. It is true that farther on in the fourth commandment there are negatives; but the fourth and fifth commandments emphasize the positive. I suppose you know, Alma, that the Sabbath represents a beautiful positive relationship with our Lord. In Genesis 2:1-3 it says it was celebrated by our Lord, and we follow His example. More than this the Sabbath was intended to accentuate in our minds the character of our Lord."

I continued, "The very first characteristic of our Lord, Alma, that is given in the Bible, is His creatorship. He is the creative, positive One. 'In the beginning God created.' God connects this with the holy rest day.² These two chapters of Genesis tell how God also made other things. He created the world out of nothing, but He made Adam and Eve out of that which He had already made—the dust of the ground.³ And the holy Sabbath is given because of two positive actions of our Lord: (1) creating, (2) making. This pictures our Lord as a builder—a constructive Lord—not a negative master at all. Don't you agree, Alma?"

Alma nodded assent.

I continued: "In Exodus 16:29 God associates Sabbath keeping with another positive characteristic—His generosity. If God gave me on one day the bread of two days, as this text states, isn't that generosity?"

Alma said she had never thought of that before.

"Then," I went on, "the Bible says the Sabbath is a sign between God and His people.⁴ Since God is love,⁵ His kingdom is love, and His flag must stand for His love.⁶ Love is the most positive and powerful force in the universe."

Alma said she had never thought of that before either. She had found her reasonable spirit rebelling against so many negatives that she had overlooked that true Sabbath keeping is beautiful and positive.

"I don't eat pork. I know the seventh day is the right day to keep," Alma exclaimed. "I believe in Jesus—so I couldn't be a Jew. And I couldn't belong to a Sunday-keeping church. But I'm fed up with all these negatives in our church."

Alma knew there are negatives in life. If your baby were about to fall down the steps or put its hand on a hot stove, your love would surely try to prevent it with the needed negative. But Alma objected to the negative philosophy of some Christians. They presented Christianity as a burden.

"Alma, you are rebelling against the things you *should* rebel against," I said with a smile. "You are detesting what you *should* abominate. Your whole soul *should* object to the misinformation you have grown up under. But in my study of this entire question I have found only the beautiful character of our Lord as associated in the Word of God directly with Creation and the Sabbath. May I share them with you?"

"Oh, yes, please do," Alma said with a faint smile.

"I'll be glad to. As I've mentioned already, our Lord is creative. He is constructive and generous. Our Lord is loving—and these are just a few of the many characteristics of our Lord."

Then I shared with Alma the experience of the mother who came to me asking for counsel on how to keep her boy in the church and how to train her younger children so that they would want to stay in the church too.

You will remember that my wife and I suggested that she use the big toys for the Sabbath, instead of merely telling the children to put away their toys they played with during the week, thus making the Sabbath a "don't day."

I also explained how in our evangelistic meetings we have often approached the subject of healthful living, not as a set of don'ts but as a set of dos. The don'ts are there. Jesus presented some important dos and don'ts, but the negatives are eclipsed by the positives when we think of each one as a promise.

Early in our ministry we decided to present a health lecture once a week during the course of every evangelistic campaign. The very first health lecture compared a "do" face with a "don't" face. We contrasted a negative approach with a positive attitude. We went on to show the audience the effect of a negative attitude on the whole being—body, mind, and soul. We pictured also the fruit of a positive, buoyant philosophy. The negative thinker worries, frets and fusses. He might be stubborn too. When he gets angry, the stomach gets tense. When he shows a stubborn spirit, the stomach and the rest of the organs of the body malfunction. All of this is due to a negative spirit. It can produce stomach trouble or heart trouble. Often faulty elimination accompanies this kind of attitude and brings on other problems.

"The people seemed to like that sermon," I told Alma, "because they saw themselves in this situation. I'll have to admit, however, that some of my

brethren thought I went too far in these health studies. They felt it was more entertainment than study! But to me healthful living is fun, and I wanted to equate healthful living with delight and joy! Having formed this association in the minds of my listeners, it was not difficult to persuade them to make changes in their diet and other health habits—a little at a time."

Then I said, "When we came to the question of healthful drinks, we had a whole array of different hot and cold drinks on the table on the platform. That would eliminate the complaint, 'If I give up certain liquids which contain poison, what can I drink?' We just never heard that complaint from anyone, because we had a format of positives. We told the people what God would have them to do far more than what *not* to do. The health message is a positive, joyous message."

"On one of the nights during the health-lecture series we showed the value of the use of water—in drinking as well as in fomentations, etc. I actually drank water before the audience on that night."

"I explained to them that early in the morning we should take two glasses of water some time before breakfast. Then when breakfast comes we should not drink. As I spoke, I drank the first two glasses of water. Then I suggested that after a couple of hours or so have passed after breakfast, we can drink two more glasses, and I proceeded to drink those two glasses of water. By the time I got to the afternoon drinking—that is the fifth glass, the audience was smiling. But when I drank the sixth glass of water they were laughing. Then I explained that after the evening meal, in a reasonable time, they might drink the last two glasses of water. By this time I was drinking the seventh glass of water, and the people were wondering where I was putting it all!"

"I'll tell you, Alma," I continued, "no one equated healthful living with don'ts in that meeting. One lady went home from our meetings, after she had attended some two or three weeks, exclaiming, 'I believe what they are teaching about Bible doctrines, but I wouldn't take a thousand dollars for what I have learned regarding health.' They felt we were making a contribution to their everyday lives. And that's what we endeavored to do. I never once heard anyone complain about the negatives."

"When we came to the point of healthful foods, we had a wonderful display of good, nourishing food. It had been prepared by the ladies of the church in a delightful manner. These dishes not only looked very attractive—they tasted 'out of this world.'"

"By the time I had explained the wonderful things God has given us to eat, the don'ts were so overshadowed by the dos that no one ever came to me with the criticism, 'You are a negative people,' or 'I'll have to give up a lot to become a Christian.' How could we do otherwise, when Sabbath keeping is a sign of a positive God?"

I did not relate these experiences to Alma to boast. Far from it. I am sure that we made many mistakes in our health talks. Nevertheless, there was one mistake that we did not make—that of negativism. The don'ts were, as I say, so completely covered by the wonderful dos that the people were thrilled. We came to find that the health night was among the best attended of all the nights of the week.

Then the pastor, who was sitting there listening to the conversation, spoke up. "Alma, our church needs hundreds of ladies like you, to set a positive example and to present a beautiful format of Christianity!"

We suggested to Alma that there are negative personalities in almost every church. It is part of their makeup. Their lives are empty because they do not know the love of Jesus.

There are also those who have got their eyes fixed on *things* instead of Jesus. To them the Christian life becomes a "pilgrimage of sighs." They hope to find salvation by living up to some external standards. They say, but do not know by experience, that salvation comes *only* through Jesus Christ.²

I shared with Alma that we are not to keep the Sabbath to be saved. We do not refrain from alcohol or tobacco in order to be saved. Nor are we to refrain from certain articles of diet so that Christ will forgive and cleanse and save us. No! A thousand times No!

Rather we are to come to Jesus as we are—sinful, unworthy, weak, and depraved. We are to ask Him to receive us and give us, not merely repentance and forgiveness,⁸ but a new heart,⁹ and eternal life. Then we are to believe that He has given us all in Jesus Christ and return thanks that we *have* received.

When a sinner has been forgiven, cleansed, saved by the grace of Christ, he is pictured in Isaiah 58:14 as being a delightful person. Notice: "Then shalt thou delight thyself in the Lord."

It is because I am delighted with the Lord that I am delighted with all of His things, including His day of worship. It is only then that I can truly "call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable."¹⁰

Thus, the Sabbath-keeping way is a delightful way. It is not a "pilgrimage of sighs." Far from it. All our service, then, springs from love for our Lord and Saviour. I defy the drunkard to show me that he is as happy as I am. I challenge any professed Christian to prove to me that cancer-producing tobacco gives him an assurance I have found in a Christ whose indwelling life delivers me from the power of the filthy weed! I invite any world-loving, pleasure-mad soul to testify of a rare delight such as I have found in the Lord. God says, "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him."¹¹

We looked at the clock on the wall, and Alma apologized for having to bring

this discussion to a close. It was time for her to pick up the children from an appointment. She expressed real appreciation for the time we had spent with her and indicated that there were many other questions she would like to ask in the light of this new positive approach. She invited us to return at our earliest convenience.

There were other things I would have liked to discuss with Alma. One would be the sad results of evil speaking, faultfinding, and criticism. When children hear their parents criticising some Christian worker in the Sabbath School or the church, or perhaps a teacher in the day school, it makes an impression. They associate these negatives with the experience of the one who speaks negatively. And why not? It is natural!

A little six-year-old girl lost her father whom she idolized. A few months later, her mother brought a friend, Bob, to the house. The girl, Nancy, was thrilled! She ran to Bob and threw her little arms around his neatly pressed trouser leg in sheer delight and innocent love.

"Nancy!" her mother said, a frown creasing her brow, "don't do that! Now you go on and play."

But Nancy did not seem to hear or see Mother. To make it more definite, and to obtain the desired results, Mother spoke more sternly to Nancy, "Nancy, if you do that again, Bob will not come back."

In spite of this warning, every time Bob came, Nancy greeted him with a hug around the leg. Mother continued to threaten, "Nancy, if you do that, Bob won't come back."

It never dawned on Mother that she was forming in Nancy's subconscious mind an image—one that would very nearly ruin Nancy's life later on.

One day Mother and Bob decided to terminate their friendship. Bob never returned. Little Nancy associated his not returning with Mother's threat and her own forwardness. By being too friendly she had lost a love she craved.

But because she was a little girl, Nancy was unable to analyze what was taking place in her own mind. Little children are unable to do this. Not until Nancy was in her teens did she realize that something had happened to her thinking as a child. She could not understand why she froze every time a personable young man became friendly! Some of the boys in school wanted dates with Nancy. But she could not bring herself to do what she longed to do.

One day, in sheer desperation, Nancy went to seek counsel. The experience she had when she was six years old came to the surface. Then, and only then, did she realize the tremendous effect that this one oft repeated statement by her mother had accomplished in coloring her thinking.

Galatians 6:7 tells us that "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Little did that dear mother know what she was sowing in Nancy's mind. And

little do fault-finding, critical parents know what a few derogatory words spoken in the hearing of their little children do to warp their lives. The children associate that deacon against whom the parents speak—or that elder, or that superintendent—with the church of which Mother and Daddy are members. Later, parents are astonished that their children have no interest in the church. Some children actually become infidels.

These parents, later on, come in desperation to the pastor, requesting him to work for their children's salvation. They might have a list of reasons why they think their son or daughter left the church. They might blame a school teacher, a member of the church, or some incident. The real reason—the basic reason—for the children's leaving the church is the attitude that was implanted in their young minds. The parents are reaping what they have sown.

Would it not be well for us all to join the "I-Know-Something-Good Club"? We had the privilege of first organizing such clubs thirty years ago.

People of all faiths have joined these clubs. The motto of the club is, "I will speak evil of no man."¹² They determine to esteem others better than themselves.¹³ If they do find fault with another, they will obey the scriptural injunction to go to him alone ¹⁴ "in the spirit of meekness."¹⁵

How I wished that I might have discussed these things with Alma had time permitted. But since there may be many Almas reading this, we give it as a caution against the don'ts—the negatives—which deny the positives of our delightful Lord.

I asked the pastor later what happened to Alma, and he told me that Alma had received such courage and comfort from that visit that she took a new hold on Christ and became a wonderful working member of the church. She and John found new love again, and the home was united in the bonds of love. I was thrilled to know this.

Think of the joy, peace, and happiness which might have been hers if, through the years from childhood, Alma could have experienced the sweetness of the positive Christ, the loving Christ, the fellowshiping Christ!

We repeat that, of course, there *are* "don'ts"—justifiable ones. But we are to fulfill a mission. That mission is to reveal to others that Christ is "altogether lovely."¹⁶

The psalmist, after his great sin, discovered the need for forgiveness and the joy that accompanies salvation. He cried out, "Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, and cleanse me from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions; and my sin is ever before me." Then he continued by praying, "Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me." It was then that he added this penetrating prayer: "Restore unto me the *joy* of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit. Then will I teach transgressors thy ways; and sinners shall be

converted unto thee."¹⁷ Please take special notice of the mission which he acknowledged after his fall. It was to have a restoration of the "joy" of our Lord's "salvation." And it is followed with the ability to "teach transgressors" God's ways and to convert sinners to the Lord.

How we pray that every reader of this work will ask, believe, and claim God's program for their souls! That is the program of reflecting the delights found in Jesus Christ. To go about our work and to mingle with others in a sad unhappy frame of mind is not true Christianity. It misrepresents our Lord Jesus Christ. It denies His character and His commands. It gives others the impression that His commandments are grievous. But this is a lie. "His commandments are not grievous."¹⁸ Therefore as we are to "call the sabbath a delight," and we are to "delight" ourselves in the Lord,¹⁹ for "the joy of the Lord" is our "strength."²⁰ And "in . . . [His] presence there is fulness of joy; at . . . [His] right hand there are pleasures for evermore."²¹

Dear Father in heaven, I thank You that You have put this prayer into our hearts: "O come, let us sing unto the Lord; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation. Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving, and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms."²² We sincerely ask that this may be the experience of each one of us. We believe that there is "joy and peace in believing,"²³ and that we may ask and receive that our joy may be full. We thank You that we are now receiving this gift of joy and happiness as a fruit of the Holy Spirit as You have promised.²⁴ In Jesus' name, Amen.

FREE IN CHRIST

What positives are found in Thee,
Thy don'ts are but protection,
The law of life but sets me free,
Clad in Thy great perfection.

My happiness is Thy delight,
Who died to bring me life;
Eternal life—to ever be
Free from a world of strife.

And Thou art coming very soon
To take me to Thy throne.
Oh, hasten, come, thou happy day,
For I am going home.

Reflection: We suggest that you meditate on the seven great Bible texts following. You may also wish to try out the ten-point program, making a list each day of ten things for which to be grateful, vocalizing them at least three times each day. This practice can do wonders for the body and mind.

1. Our Lord is "altogether lovely" (Song of Solomon 5:16).
2. When He restores to us "the joy of . . . [His] salvation," we will "teach transgressors" His way, and "sinners shall be converted" unto Him (Psalm 51:12, 13).
3. "His commandments are not grievous" (1 John 5:3).
4. Delighting ourselves in the Lord and calling the Sabbath a delight go hand in hand (Isaiah 58:13, 14).
5. "The joy of the Lord is . . . [our] strength" (Nehemiah 8:10).
6. We are to "come before his presence with thanksgiving" (Psalm 95:2).
7. There is "joy and peace in believing" God (Romans 15:13).

References:

1. Genesis 1:1.
2. Genesis 2:1-3.
3. Genesis 2:7.
4. Exodus 31:16, 17.
5. 1 John 4:8.
6. Song of Solomon 2:4.
7. See Acts 4:12.
8. See Acts 5:31.
9. See Ezekiel 36:26.
10. Isaiah 58:13.
11. 1 John 2:15.
12. Based on Titus 3:2.
13. Philippians 2:3.
14. See Matthew 18:15.
15. Galatians 6:1.
16. Song of Solomon 5:16.
17. Psalm 51:2, 3, 10, 12, 13.
18. 1 John 5:3.
19. Isaiah 58:13, 14.
20. Nehemiah 8:10.
21. Psalm 16:11.
22. Psalm 95:1, 2.
23. Romans 15:13.
24. Galatians 5:22.

16 Dog Sense

What kind of positive thinking is biblical?

When I was a boy going to a little red schoolhouse, I had to pass my uncle's house. He lived right next to the schoolhouse. Every day, it seemed, he would stand on the front porch and make fun of me as I passed by. He told me I looked like old lady Dianthy, and then he would laugh out loud and taunt me.

Now, the lady he accused me of resembling was an aunt of mine. She was a good elderly lady; absolutely nothing was wrong with her. But I was a little boy, and no little boy wants to be called "an old woman," no matter how good the old woman is. Nor was that all.

With a sneer and a tone that betrayed certain inner feelings, he would tell me that I was the homeliest boy he had ever seen. Then he would whinney like a horse and point his finger at me. All that, truly, from a man at least forty years of age.

You can imagine how a little boy would react. I came to the place where I shuddered to go past my uncle's home. I dreaded his voice. I cringed from that awful laugh. I associated his laugh with the taunts that I was an ugly little boy that looked like an old lady. In fact, I became conditioned not to like to hear laughter at all—of any kind!

Without realizing it, I had set up in my mind some false associations.

Years passed. I became a young minister in the nation's capital. One afternoon I was eating in a nearly empty restaurant. The manager and one of his helpers were taking advantage of the slow time and were eating as well. I can still recall how these two men, sitting about twenty-five feet from me, looked in my direction from time to time as they ate. Then, for some reason, they laughed. I promptly got up, and, leaving my meal unfinished, walked toward the door. The manager, noticing my disturbed countenance, said, "Sir, was there something wrong with your meal?"

"No, sir," I replied, "but I'm not going to sit there and be laughed at!"

It wasn't until years later that I realized that they weren't laughing at me at all.

But I had associated the mere act of laughing with the unpleasant experience of my childhood when my uncle laughed at me. It had made a lasting impression. For years after, every time I heard a person laughing, I wondered if there was something wrong with me. My subconscious mind had interpreted all laughing as directed at me.

Now, you see, what I did was a foolish thing for a boy to do. What my uncle did was a foolish thing for a man to do, too. But something that seemed trivial to him seemed very large to me. This reaction occurs often in young minds!

Years after my wife and I were married, we returned to her home in Massachusetts. She wanted to look once more at the "big hill" where she and her sisters played as girls. When we arrived, the "big hill" turned out to be a gentle little rise in the terrain. But to her, as a child, it had seemed like a large rise, the "big hill." You see we are all, more or less, influenced by the law of association.

This connection begins when we are very young. And some things that may seem trivial to another take on large dimensions that often follow through right into adulthood.

The devil is a past master at associating beautiful things with sin. But remember this, he got the idea of the law of association from Jesus Christ—for the law of association belongs to God. God wants us to associate everything good with Him and with His plan for the human family, since everything truly good does indeed spring from Him and from His plans for us. His law is a delight, and this duty can be beautiful and delightful in Him.

The devil realized this long ago when he said, "I am going to prove to the world that sin is lovely. If I can get the human race to associate wrong with loveliness, I

will lead them from God in revolt. They will be lost! Forever!"

That's how the great battle for the mind and heart began. It is a battle between Christ and Satan for the affections of mankind. Because Jesus is the One "altogether lovely,"¹ Satan has transformed himself into an angel of beauty and light. He has made himself attractive to us gullible humans. He has tried—and successfully—to associate sin with loveliness. He has made sin scintillate with excitement! He has made it look very attractive.

Now you and I step into the picture. There is an immediate battle on for our affections and interests. Everyone who professes the name of Christ can attest to this. In every case this battle is waged. The born-again Christian realizes that true beauty is associated with right and that duty can be delightful. God made it so! We should always consider it a privilege and an honor to associate sacred things with lovely things and enjoy them as such.

When men and women know that our Saviour is a delightful personality and His worship is a delight, they will more readily decide to serve Him. "O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness."² "Call the sabbath a delight."³ When we do that, we shall be astonished at the number of our loved ones who will choose God's things in preference to the devil's attractions. To know Jesus is to know the loveliest individual in all the world. He is the "lily of the valley"; He is the "bright and morning star"; He is the "fairest of ten thousand." Whatever He asks His children to do, He asks them to do not because it is right, merely, but because it is a delight! And then in time we shall know that the right is better for us too. It is not simply a duty; it is a beautiful thing when we rightly understand it. The Sabbath philosophy teaches us this lesson.

Do you know what our Creator thought when he had made light on the first day? The Bible says, "God saw . . . that it was good." At the end of the third day, as God viewed His handiwork, He had the same opinion. And at the end of the fourth day, the fifth day, and the sixth day He still felt the same way. When He finished the week, the Bible says that "God saw every thing that He had made, and, behold, it was very good."⁴ Then God crowned His work with the jewel of jewels—the Sabbath day. He said, in essence, "This day stands for all My work. In it I will rest."⁵ How God honored the delightful Sabbath day!

In Isaiah 58:13 God is saying again, I made the world in six days. Everything was very good. I crowned my work with the creation of the delightful Sabbath day, and I want you to consider it so.

"Sabbath is a happy day," we sing, and how our children love to sing it with us that way! But in the earthly days of Jesus, 2000 years ago, the people who were called by the name of the Lord had so completely forgotten His law of delight that they had turned the Sabbath into a backbreaking burden.

Christ healed a man on the Sabbath to make the man whole and allow him to

live normally. He was ushering him into a delightful experience. But it filled the ruler of the synagogue with indignation. This ruler said, "Don't you do that on the Sabbath! Let the sick people come here some other day. But let's not get involved with this kind of thing on the Sabbath day!"

Can you imagine that? To them, Sabbath keeping was narrowed down to the observance of a list of rules and regulations, and it had become a burden to them. These burdens they heaped on the shoulders of the people. A heavy burden, the Sabbath became—anything but a delight!

My, but the devil surely confused the minds of the people of God, didn't he? Now we are trying to help people see that the religion of Jesus is delightful. When we believe it ourselves, and help others to see this too, something big is going to happen!

I recall as a boy going to a special series of meetings held in our church. I sat with my mother. The preacher was as dry as the proverbial "hills of Gilboa." But I had to sit there, and I was supposed to listen to those dry sermons—and enjoy them! I didn't have the slightest idea what he was talking about and cared even less.

I remember that my mother wore a fox collar. The two eyes were made from glass-topped pins.

After I sat as long as I could, I began to play with that fox. My, did this little Coon and the little fox have fun! I would pull out those eyes and make the fox cross-eyed. Then I would make him look straight ahead. Oh, yes, I also was able to adjust his ears and wiggle his nose!

Someone might ask, "Why did your mother permit you to do all this?" I don't know, but I'll tell you what I *think*! I think Mother felt the same about the preaching as I did. Perhaps she would have liked to play with the fox fur too. But it wouldn't have looked right for her to do it. She was older and could make the mental adjustments—but I was just a lad, and she didn't want me to become weary of religion.

In our home we loved religion. We loved the Bible. We loved the stories of the Bible. Now, the experience in church was not the same, and my mother realized that. She sat and listened patiently, but allowed me to amuse myself until we could get back home where religion could once more be associated with the things of joy.

If we want our boys and girls to love religion, we must let them know that we love it—not just patiently endure it. True enjoyment of one's religion shows! If I had had to sit and listen to that man, whom I couldn't understand, hating every minute of it, I might have grown up hating religion. Now, that's a boy for you. I wiggled as a boy (I still do), and I needed to cope with it. I want to tell you that little fox played a great part in my experience of learning to love the Lord.

We should not be "enduring" the Lord; we should be delighted with the Lord. This kind of delight is contagious. Others will soon catch the spirit, for that's what happens when we're delightful! Yes, when we are enthusiastic and show joy in the observance of the Sabbath, others will want to enjoy the Sabbath too.

Several years ago my wife and I were traveling across the continent on our way to our next evangelistic appointment. We were invited to spend a few restful days with a couple of friends. Our evangelistic work had been very demanding, so we were glad for the opportunity to relax. But, alas, news leaked out that we were in the area, and it wasn't long before a desperate mother asked if she might come over and discuss with us a problem that she was having. We told her we would be happy to see her.

When the mother arrived, she explained, "Brother Coon, my ten-year-old son announced to me the other day that he is not going back to Sabbath School anymore. It came as such a shock to me, especially when I realized that he was not kidding. He meant it. What am I going to do?" Her eyes indicated that her heart was breaking, and the problem seemed too hard to solve.

I was very happy that she came. I was glad to be of service, when a little boy's future was at stake. I forgot that I was tired, and with a prayer in my heart I began to ask questions and probe the problem that had been placed before me. I was charged with the realization that here was a situation that could be duplicated in countless homes; here was a mother who wanted a solution to the problem instead of accepting it as a matter of course.

There is only one place to turn to at a time like this—the Bible. It has the solution to every problem. This Book is not merely a book containing doctrine; it is an encyclopedia of practical Christian living.

And so I picked up the Bible and shared a few passages of Scripture with her and endeavored to lay the groundwork on which we were going to build. Then I turned to several texts. "Call the sabbath a delight," "Worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness," I pointed out that religion may be unattractive, but it has to be made attractive by us so that young minds can catch the picture. "Show your boy that Jesus is lovely; make Him attractive and appealing; make Him sound worthy of emulation."

Then I told her the following incident that had made a deep impression on me:

Some time ago my wife and I were guests at a rather large church. I was to speak at the worship hour. The superintendent of the primary division asked me to speak to her little people. I always enjoy doing this, so I readily accepted the invitation.

It was still quite early and very few children had arrived, so I sat down and watched the children come in. There must have been two hundred children in that department. After they were seated, they had their opening exercises and

sang several songs. Just before it was my turn to speak, the superintendent, a very lovely lady, made two mistakes.

Her first mistake, as far as I was concerned, was made when she said to the children, "Now, children, I hope that next Sabbath you will do differently from what you did this Sabbath. I hope you will be here on time."

I thought that was a mistake, because most of the children *were* on time. It wasn't fair for her to scold the children who were on time along with those who might have been a few minutes late, for they weren't guilty. She had made the Sabbath School undelightful by having scolded innocent children.

She might have said something like this: "Boys and girls, I have something wonderful to tell you. You know when Sabbath School started this morning, almost all of you were on time. I think that's wonderful!"

Wouldn't that have been better? Those who did come late would have done their very best to be on time the next Sabbath. The superintendent might also have said, "Now, I know that there were a few of you who weren't on time. But I believe you wanted to be. Do you know what I think?"

Then she could have become very confidential. "I think Daddy overslept!" This would have taken the blame off of them and made them feel better.

In that crowd of children there would have been at least two or three children frantically waving their hands waiting for recognition trying to tell the teacher that that's exactly what did happen. Daddy overslept.

But, you know, that wasn't all. Then she made her second mistake. She began scolding the children for not sitting quietly when they came into the Sabbath School room. "Oh, I thought to myself, 'That's even worse than the first scolding.' Boys and girls weren't made to sit absolutely quiet, especially when nothing is going on. I remembered my boyhood and the trouble I had sitting absolutely quiet. In fact, I still have trouble sitting quiet! When I see children wiggle in church, I remember that I wiggled too. And they're just like I was!"

The superintendent might have said something like this, "Now, children, I want to tell you something else. You know when you came into our Sabbath School room this morning, bless your hearts, I saw one of the finest things I have ever seen. I saw a hundred or more of you come right in and sit down like little ladies and gentlemen. I think that's wonderful!"

The children would have been thrilled. They would have thought, "She's praising me. I didn't do as well as I might have, but she still appreciates my effort."

Then for the benefit of the few who were not as well behaved as they might have been, she might have said, "I understand how hard it is to sit quiet, especially since we don't have nice soft cushions to sit on. But I know you'll wiggle just as little as possible. Why don't we all wiggle together now as we stand

and sing an action song." This would have helped the children to love religion.

We hope to persuade all Christians to take on the mission of witnessing to a joyful worship both on the holy worship day and throughout the week. The Bible contains 826 texts which teach us to fulfill this mission. Don't you think we should follow the Word of God and not merely obey, but obey with rejoicing that others may know that His yoke is not grievous?⁶

Now back to the superintendent. She might have added, "And children, I have some special news to share with you now. Next Sabbath morning we are going to have something very special at the beginning of Sabbath School. You will love it. I'm not going to tell you what it is; but, remember, you'll have to be here right at the very beginning of Sabbath School for this special surprise."

This method could have taken care of the problem of tardiness without the children associating the Sabbath School with unpleasant scolding. The same group of children could have played a little game of being quiet for one minute—perfectly quiet. The superintendent might have timed them with her watch and made a game out of it. Maybe it would have lasted only 20 seconds. It would seem like a minute to them!

With appropriate remarks and appreciation, the superintendent could handle most of the wigglers. On rare occasions she would resort to something drastic, for order must be preserved. However, each teacher, each officer, each church member has a duty to build into their children's souls a *love* for worship, a delight in doing right, a beauty in duty. This is a definite command of God.

When I finished relating the experience about the superintendent, the mother of this problem ten-year-old boy was in tears.

"I've made exactly those mistakes," she gasped. "But with God's help I will go and do differently."

You see, friends, it is not enough to be religious. We must be *delightfully* religious. It is not sufficient for us to do right. We must do right in the "*beauty*" of holiness."

You have noticed that the title of this chapter is "Dog Sense." I think this idea was first impressed on my mind when I was at the home of my daughter Juanita, when I was recuperating from surgery.

She has a German shepherd named Midnight. He is now several years old, but he is the most delightful creature to have around. He still acts like a young puppy. He is kind, joyful, and innocent. He does, however, have some bad habits. One of them is digging holes in the yard. He seems to be like a little child—he has to be doing something all the time.

Several months ago Juanita decided to take a course in dog training. There she learned, among other things, that it does not take very long for a dog to learn. When the trainer repeats the same gesture only a limited number of times, the

dog associates that gesture with something pleasant or unpleasant. If he is whipped once or twice, he will shy away. He associates the whip with pain.

I have thought of this in connection with the law of association in the human family. It does not take long to associate certain unpleasant things, and to avoid their use or company. If, whenever you are around a certain person, you are made to feel unwanted or embarrassed, it does not take long to avoid that person. Other things sometimes create the same sensations.

Midnight is just a dog. Yet he has keen sense of association. The Lord has placed within the mind of man this same basic law. All of animate creation has, to some degree at least, been endowed with this gift. May the Lord help us adults to awaken to good "dog sense" now. May He help us to know that what we instill in our children by way of association can be in their minds for a long, long time.

Our Lord not merely commands us to worship Him, He, through the inspired psalmist, commands, "O worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness."⁷ Remember, He has said concerning His worship, "Call the sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable."⁸

He is wooing His children into a worshipful spirit that is *beautiful, delightful, and full of joy*. He longs to see those who worship Him radiate this delightful joy and beauty and thereby attract others to His lovely worship day. He wants all people everywhere to associate His worship and His worship day with happiness. Such happiness will draw all the world unto Him.

Reflection: May the following scriptures be used by the Holy Spirit as you meditate prayerfully.

As we conclude this chapter, we would like to consider the following from Holy Scripture:

1. We are exhorted to "worship the Lord in the beauty of holiness" (Psalm 96:9).
2. We should associate the Sabbath with delight (Isaiah 58:13).
3. As the Lord completed each day's work during Creation Week, He saw that it was good (Genesis 1:10, 18, 21).
4. At the close of the sixth day of Creation "God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good" (Genesis 1:31).
5. On the seventh day God "ended his work which he had made: and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it; because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made" (Genesis 2:2, 3).
6. He made the Sabbath for man (Mark 2:27, 28).
7. He gave the Sabbath as a kind of "keepsake." We therefore rejoice to "keep it holy" (Exodus 20:8-11; 31:16, 17; Nehemiah 8:10).

References:

1. Song of Solomon 5:16.
2. Psalm 96:9.
3. Isaiah 58:13.
4. Genesis 1:31.
5. See Genesis 2:1-3.
6. See Matthew 11:28-30.
7. Psalm 96:9.
8. Isaiah 58:13.

17

The Divine Timekeeper

The perfection and loving care of our Lord is demonstrated in His beautiful timing.

A bashful little girl stood before the drugstore counter almost unnoticed. After waiting on the other customers, the druggist asked in a crisp voice, "What do you want?"

The little girl replied, "Please, sir, my mother is sick. Will you give her some medicine?" With that she placed a slip of paper on the counter. The druggist quickly filled the prescription, poured it in a bottle, handed it to the little girl—and she was gone.

A moment later the druggist stopped his work abruptly and stood staring into space. "Did I—?"

The cold perspiration seemed to pour from every pore in his body. Then he was sure. In his haste to fill the prescription he had included an element in the preparation that made the mixture a poison.

If the mother took a dose, it would kill her. He would be a murderer. Quickly he found the slip of paper and looked for an address. There was none. He didn't know who the girl was or how to find her.

He did the only thing he knew left to do. He prayed, "Oh, God, please don't let the mother take the medicine. Keep it from her—please." He sat down and held

his head in his hands. "Oh, God," he repeated again and again, "I've not served You as I should have, but if You prevent this mother from taking this medicine, I'll serve You for the rest of my life."

Just then the door opened again, and there stood the little girl, frustration written all over her face.

"Please sir, I was running home, and I tripped and fell and broke the bottle of medicine. Would you please give me another bottle? I'll be more careful next time."

Even while the druggist was pleading with God, whom he had neglected, God had come to his rescue. God's timing—love's timing—is perfect.

One day long ago Jesus directed one of His disciples to go to the sea and cast in a hook. The first fish that he would catch would have a piece of money in its mouth. With this money he was directed to pay the temple tax.¹

Peter did as he was told and, lo and behold, there in the fish's mouth he found the money just as he was told he would. It took divine timing for the hook and the fish to meet. It took the power that controls nature. He who orders the fish of the sea directed one specific fish to meet the hook at a specific time in order to fulfill the need of the specific moment. Surely there were many hungry fish in that body of water. But just one fish was directed to bite the hook and be pulled to shore. This illustrates again the mighty power the Creator of the universe has. He can direct the fish of the sea and the heart of a man.

The same all-wise Ruler of nature had arranged more than thirty years before for a group of Eastern magi—wise men—to come on a long journey, to start at the right time, to travel at the right speed, and to arrive on the right day to make connection with the family who were soon to leave for another land. This family did not have means for the trip, except as these others should arrive at just the appropriate time to supply that need.²

Divine wisdom timed the movements of all concerned so that His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, would receive gifts from these wealthy men—gifts sufficient to defray the expenses of the journey Jesus and His parents were to take in order to fulfill a prophecy of the Old Testament Scriptures. Surely this is the One of whom godly men have written by divine inspiration, who is "upholding all things by the word of his power,"³ and who also made the worlds.⁴

This word of power was so great that, when at Creation's dawn it echoed, "Let there be," the record says, "There was." This was the word which the psalmist referred to when he said, "By the word of the Lord were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth." "For he spake, and it was . . . : he commanded, and it stood fast."⁵

It was He who made the world and rested on the seventh day of Creation—set it aside for man by hallowing and sanctifying it—⁶ who, because His timing is

perfect, causes miracle after miracle of nature to take place before our very eyes until we take these heavenly timings for granted.

Someone has said that if we could plant nuts and bolts in the ground and grow perfect cars, we would soon cease to wonder at or appreciate the greatness and intricacy of cars.

All nature is full of the wisdom of our Creator. His perfect timing is seen in the growing of flowers, of corn, of wheat, and of every shrub and tree. "To every thing there is a season," the wise man said, "and a time to every purpose under the heaven."⁷

The Capistrano swallows return on time at their appointed season. The fish spawn on time, the flower is pollinated on time, and the trillions of galaxies move in the great heavenly sea with perfect precision because of Him whose timing is perfect.

I stood in the hall of science at one world's fair and looked with wonder at the achievements of man. I was impressed with this statement: "The measure of a scientist is his ability to reach out beyond himself." How exceedingly far man has been able to reach out! God would have mankind reach out even farther—all the way to his Maker.

Sacred Scripture begins with the words, "In the beginning God."⁸ It continues by such commands as, "Remember now thy Creator."⁹ It insists that Christ, your and my Redeemer and Lord, is that Creator.¹⁰

I'm happy that He remembers us precisely on time too, aren't you? How many instances we have of our Lord's wonderful timing in our lives! Have you ever wondered what would happen if the light rays reaching the retina of the eye had different speeds? Suppose some slowed down by a fraction of a second. What confusion it would bring to the eye!

Then think of the wave lengths that activate the ear drum. Think of the confusion of sound we would hear if the pattern or the speed were changed. Oh, I'm grateful for the intricate timing God has devised so that everything fits perfectly.

I remember an experience we had more than thirty years ago while on our way to church one Sabbath morning. We were driving a Whippet car along a rugged serpentine mountainous road on the Island of Grenada, British West Indies. We were hurrying along with just enough time to get to the church if we maintained our speed. Everything was going well, when suddenly, for no apparent reason, the motor stopped. It had never done this before, and I wondered what the trouble could be.

I jumped out of the car, raised the hood, and peered at the motor to see if I could see anything that might have come loose. As I was examining the engine, I looked up just in time to see a mammoth rock come rolling down the hill and

across the road a hundred feet ahead.

Had we continued our journey, we surely would have met with disaster. When I stepped back in the car, I pushed the starter and the motor started immediately. We had no doubt in our minds that the angel of the Lord was there to protect us from danger. The timing was perfect. We paused and thanked our Lord for His protection.

This same God protected Daniel in the lions' den. Had the angel arrived just a moment too late, Daniel would have landed in the lions' stomachs.¹¹

Daniel, chapter three, tells of the three Hebrew worthies who, unwilling to bow in worship to anyone but their Maker, were thrown into the fiery furnace. Had the One "like the Son of God" come to their rescue one split second too late, these men would have burned to a crisp.

I am so glad that our Maker is our friend and that He, who timed the first great week of Creation, times and orders the lives of all who serve Him today.

Another thrilling story of deliverance because of the perfect timing of our God of love is the story of Esther. Mordecai was willing to risk his life—and the life of Esther, the queen—in the face of wicked Haman and his evil devices. You will remember that Haman wanted Mordecai to bow down to him, but Mordecai would bow only to the God of heaven. Because Mordecai was true to his Maker, Haman planned to execute Mordecai on a gallows he had erected.¹²

Once again God's timing was perfect. Read the story of Esther again and notice how our God worked in behalf of Mordecai and Esther. God disturbed the sleep of Ahasuerus, the king, the very night before Mordecai was to die. Haman stood in the courtyard waiting to see the king for permission to hang Mordecai. But God's perfect timing reversed Mordecai's hanging, and instead Haman was strung up on his own gallows!

This brings to mind the story of Mr. John Hamston, a Sunday School teacher in the large Baptist church in a certain Eastern town. He heard of a group of people who observe Saturday for their rest and worship day. He felt they were misguided and was determined to straighten them out. So in a rather matter-of-fact way he opened his Bible and decided he would find an abundance of texts of Scripture which, he was sure, indicate the necessity of Sunday worship. He would then present these texts to the misinformed Sabbath keepers. Instead he had a little trouble finding the texts.

"Let's see," he said to himself, "where is the one that says we should honor the first day because of the resurrection of Jesus?" He looked and looked, but couldn't find it.

A little frustrated, but undaunted, he closed his Bible and decided to go over to his pastor's home and have him help to find it. Surely the pastor would know exactly where to locate it.

When Mr. Hamston told his pastor of his mission, the pastor said, "I'm sorry, sir, but there is no such text."

Now he was confused and a little shaken. Hadn't he been keeping the first day in honor of the resurrection because the Bible commands it? Now he began a serious search for what the Bible really teaches about the Lord's day.

He read in Revelation 1:10 that the Lord does have a day. But the text does not say which day the Lord's day is—the first, second, third day, or which. Then he turned to Mark 2:28 and found that the Lord's day is the Sabbath day. But now he had to find out which day the Sabbath day is. This text didn't designate the specific day of the week.

Sabbath means "rest." So the Lord's day is the rest day. Mr. Hamston found another New Testament text of Scripture where the seventh day is declared to be God's rest day (Hebrews 4:4). When he put Isaiah 58:13 and Exodus 20:8-11 together, he had a clear picture of what the Bible teaches with regard to the Sabbath, called the Lord's holy day.

Mr. Hamston was to discover that seventh-day observers honor Christ's glorious resurrection, but they honor that tremendous event in the way appointed by Scripture. In Romans 6:1-6 and First Corinthians 11:23-26 he found that baptism, symbol of the new life, and the Lord's Supper are Heaven's appointed memorials of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus. So while we are commanded to keep the seventh day of the week as the rest day,¹⁴ we are to celebrate His resurrection by baptism and by living the new life—the resurrected life—in Christ Jesus.¹⁵ Mr. Hamston was amazed, and yet finally delighted. He at last had found the truth.

Now Mr. Hamston was about to run headlong into a problem. He was a railroad engineer. He had learned from his study of the Word of God of the sacredness of the seventh day. Being an honest man, Mr. Hamston decided he would no longer run his train on the Sabbath. He determined to give that holy day to the Lord for sacred worship.

Week after week Mr. Hamston declined to finish the run which would go into the Sabbath hours. Finally, one day, Mr. Hamston received an ultimatum. It came from a Mr. Severs, an official high in the ranks of the railroad. There was very little kindness or understanding conveyed in the note. In effect it revealed that Mr. Severs regarded Mr. Hamston's convictions as sheer nonsense and that if he was not at work the following Saturday, there would be no job to come to on Sunday.

Mrs. Hamston encouraged her husband to stand firm in his obedience to the Lord of the Lord's day. Surely a God who could create this world could and would provide for His faithful, obedient children. They read words from the lips of Jesus our Lord. Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and

all these things [the temporal necessities of life referred to in Matthew 6:25-33] shall be added unto you."

Both engaged in earnest prayer. Both believed God would do what He had promised. Both determined with Job, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him."¹⁶

The next Sabbath day came, and they observed it in harmony with God's Word. On Sunday morning Mr. Hamston wondered what to do. He had been clearly notified not to report for work again if he failed to finish his run on Saturday.

After some thought Mr. Hamston decided to return to work—or at least report in for work at the office. He had just entered the office and closed the door when one of his friends walked up to him and asked, "Have you heard what happened last night?"

"No, I guess I haven't," Mr. Hamston replied. "Tell me about it."

His friend then went on to tell him in detail what had happened. The official, who had threatened Mr. Hamston, had been replaced by a new man who kindly allowed Mr. Hamston to have his Sabbath time off.

God's timing is perfect.

Dear Lord, Thou hast declared, "There is a time there for every purpose and for every work."¹⁷ I know that "my times are in thy hand."¹⁸ and I ask that Thou wilt give me the power to believe that Thou wilt work out Thy purposes in my life. I do believe. And I return thanks that Thou art giving me the power to fit into Thy perfect timing and that, as I seek first the kingdom of God, my temporal needs will be added, just as my Lord Jesus has promised in Jesus' name. Amen.

Reflection: May our Lord Jesus through the Holy Spirit bless you in your prayerful meditation on the following scriptures.

As we conclude this important chapter, we present the following examples of timing:

1. Split-second timing caught the fish on Peter's hook (Matthew 17:27).
2. God timed the arrival of the wise men who supplied Jesus' parents with needed money for the sudden trip into Egypt (Matthew 2:1-14).
3. "To every thing there is a season, and a time to every purpose under the heaven" (Ecclesiastes 3:1).
4. Our Lord has given the timing of His holy worship day as the memorial of His great Creation (Genesis 2:1-3; Exodus 20:8-11).

References:

1. See Matthew 17:27.
2. See Matthew 2:1-14.
3. Hebrews 1:3.

4. Hebrews 11:3.
5. Psalm 33:6, 9.
6. See Mark 2:27, 28; Genesis 2:1-3.
7. Ecclesiastes 3:1.
8. Genesis 1:1.
9. Ecclesiastes 12:1.
10. See John 1:10, 14.
11. See Daniel 6.
12. See Daniel 3.
13. See Esther 5:14; 7:10.
14. Exodus 20:8-11.
15. 1 Peter 3:21; Romans 8:11.
16. Job 13:15.
17. Ecclesiastes 3:17.
18. Psalm 31:15.

18 Sprucy Lucy

The Christ of Luodicea

Lucy flew in, with a friend of hers, to see us about the breakup of her home. From the very first we observed that Lucy's husband, Harley, had done her grave injury. He had, for years, been unfaithful to her. He had had other women on the string and had flouted every offer of Lucy's to become reconciled.

Lucy had tried every avenue that she could conceive of. But none seemed to make the slightest impression on Harley! Then Lucy heard of the ABC's of prayer.

She gobbled up this philosophy as a turkey gobbles corn. For a year and a half she had gone through the ritual of "asking, believing, and claiming" God's promises for a happy home.

But nothing that Lucy prayed for seemed to happen.

We were at a loss to understand just why God seemed to turn His ear in the other direction when Lucy prayed. Hence we began to pray most earnestly that we might understand the mystery. Had God not promised "Ask, and it shall be given you" (Matthew 7:7)? Had He not promised, "And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive" (Matthew 21:22)? And was it not He who taught us to follow His example of returning thanks that we have

been heard and the prayer has been answered (John 11:41)?

It took us months to draw a conclusion. We do not wish to judge another. But to aid others in not following Lucy's example we share with you what we discovered about Lucy's relationship with her husband and with her Lord as well. And this is not in any sense to justify Harley. Lucy had every legal right to divorce him; but since she chose the route of reconciliation, she needed to learn and follow divine principles of reconciliation.

Lucy took the same attitude taken by the church of Laodicea, pictured in Revelation 3:14-21. It was that she herself was in the right. Harley was in the wrong—this fact was self-evident. But that Lucy was in the right was not so clear.

Her attitude was one of innocent, dignified self-righteousness. She felt that she had "need of nothing" just as did Laodicea. To hear of her efforts at reconciliation one would be tempted to exclaim, as did a close friend of hers, "She has a wonderful faith." So Laodicea thought of herself too.

Yet "the faithful and true witness," Christ, the "Amen" to all the promises of God,¹ states, "I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich."² Golden faith and love, which she and some closest to her sincerely thought she had, were actually missing. How do we know? She herself admitted, after months of communication, that she had actually shaken her fist in the face of God when He did not come through and grant her requests in the way she demanded.

God would have gladly forgiven Lucy for her behavior. We know of several who have sought for and received forgiveness for this. But Lucy never wavered from her attitude that God should "shape up." No, Lucy felt that she was "rich, and increased" with the goods needed for a successful marriage, but that it was God and her husband who had failed to shape up.

One day Fred, a friend of ours, went with Lucy to search for a lot on which to build her home. When we next saw Fred, he confided, "I think I know now why Lucy is having difficulty with her husband, Harley."

Lucy was asking God to shape others up instead of pleading, "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts; and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."³ God's promises are "Yea, and in him Amen, unto the glory of God by us."⁴

There was no lack of cooperation on God's part in solving the problems of the home. The lack of cooperation was not merely on the part of Harley. It lay at Lucy's door also.

"I could never live with her," confided Fred, after that day of searching with Lucy for a lot. Hers was a cultured selfishness, a refined domination, and a gracious opinionatedness.

These are not characteristics recommended by our Lord to win an ungodly mate. Our Lord's inspired apostle Peter stated that all the outward and external changes made in or on the physical person are not what is the prime factor in winning another. It is the "meek and quiet spirit."⁵ Lucy did not know how to take a truly Christian attitude toward Harley or her Lord.

In her frustration she had tried a new symbolic "planetary system." Instead of her rotating around the Lord as the earth does the sun, her scheme had herself the sun, with the Lord, like the earth, revolving around her desires. In spite of our repeated counseling she could not, dared not, submit to the rulership of Christ. The very first lines of that wonderful chapter on faith and prayer in a wonderful little book emphasize the need for this attitude. Notice how they place faith in relation to God's control:

"Faith is trusting God—believing that He loves us and knows best what is for our good. Thus, instead of our own, it leads us to choose His way. In place of our ignorance, it accepts His wisdom; in place of our weakness, His strength; in place of our sinfulness, His righteousness. Our lives, ourselves, are already His; faith acknowledges His ownership and accepts its blessings."—Ellen G. White, *Education*, p. 253.

What Lucy needed is what Laodicea needs—"I counsel thee to buy of me gold."⁶ Lucy lacked the golden love and faith that "seeketh not her own."⁷ She needed the "white raiment"⁸ to replace all her self-righteousnesses which are "filthy rags."⁹ Her "innocent sanctimony" needed to be replaced by a "heart of flesh,"¹⁰ and her blindness as to her own lack of trust needed the eyesalve of the Holy Spirit's apothecary.

Were we to share with you all the things that Lucy did in her efforts to effect reconciliation, you would probably be as surprised, if not as shocked, as we were. But all was done to change *Harley*—not *Lucy*. None of these physical changes she painfully made did the job. She needed spiritual renovation. She needed meekness, not merely beauty.

She needed the re-Creator. And can this be why our Lord Jesus pictures Himself to Laodicea as the "faithful and true witness," not merely as the "Amen" of heaven but also as "the beginning of the creation of God."¹¹ This expression, "The beginning of the creation of God," means the *source* of every created thing. This had already been made clear to Laodicea by a former message from the apostle Paul which was ordered to be read at Laodicea.¹²

Humanity can lift its face, reform its bust, correct its nose; but only the Creator can form within the heart a sweet submissiveness, a gentle meekness, a kindly and wholesome attitude.¹³

The message to Laodicea is far more than one to a local church at a particular city. It is a prophetic period—namely the last in the history of time.

God is sending a special message, both to the *world* of the last days and also to the *church* of the end of time. It is a message of One who is the very source of the "beginning of the creation of God."

In Revelation 14:6, 7 we learn that He sends a message just prior to His second coming. It is "to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people, saying . . . Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worship him that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the fountains of waters." It is saying in effect, You cannot change your heart, your attitudes; but I can, for I made the world.

While our Lord orders this message of a Creator heralded to the entire world, He Himself brings a message similar in nature to His own church, Laodicea. It is significant that while a people are proclaiming God as Creator to the world, they themselves sit back in sanctimony and self-sufficiency, needing everything that the world needs and yet not recognizing that need.

When sermons are preached, they are "pitchfork" listeners. They pitch the sermon over their shoulder to "Brother Jones" or "Sister Smith" who they know needs the message desperately. Like Lucy they recognize the need of the other, but not their own. They may even be the ones who are heralding the "everlasting gospel" to the world, while they themselves consider themselves "rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing."

But the remedy is found in the appellation of the One who addresses Laodicea. He is "the beginning of the creation of God." Why not let Him start a new beginning in our lives, dear friends!

Have you ever, dear reader, actually fallen on your knees before the Lord and asked Him, as "the beginning of the creation of God," to do what He has promised, not to your mate, not to your neighbor, not to your fellow church member—but to yourself? We have done so and been richly rewarded. We cannot receive the golden love and faith offered Laodicea except as we "commit the keeping of" our "souls to him . . . as unto a faithful Creator."¹⁴

We personally find it absolutely essential to call on our Lord to do what He has promised. "A new heart," He says, "also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them."¹⁵ Beloved, we plead with you to do as we do—fall down before Him, laud and adore Him. Ask, believe, and receive a completely new attitude—one of trust in God and humility in our relation to others.

Just recently we spent possibly two hours with a dear friend of ours who had tried gaining victories her way. We suggested that the only source of deliverance is to become Christ-centered. He says, "Behold, I stand at the door, and knock:

if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."¹⁶ Fall down and actually plead with Jesus, "the beginning of the creation of God," to change you, not another.

The remedy for family friction is the creatorship of Christ—not plans, resolutions, and organization. "Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his."¹⁷ But "if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature."¹⁸ So long as we are satisfied with ourselves and try to "play Creator" with others' lives, hoping to remake, reform, or refine them, we cannot find the power of the One who "is the beginning of the creation of God."

He waits to come into our hearts, our thinking, our constant consciousness. We suggested to the friend just above mentioned that it would be well for us to subsist on Him. We are to talk of Him, think of Him, sing of Him, and live in Him.

This is the need of the world. This is the most urgent need of professed Christians at this moment of earth's history. Laodicea is guilty of self-fellowship. And self-fellowship is self-worship. It cannot unite with Christ. It must be renounced. He wants to come into the life, but how can He enter when we are satisfied with our own attainments and merely work on the remaking of others?

Lucy went so far in her explanations of God's failures as to "humbly" state, "I am covering for my Lord." When we inquired as to what she meant by this statement, she said that when her children ask her why her prayers are not answered she "covers" for the Lord's mistakes!

What a deception! What a delusion! What a Laodicean! And what a tragedy!

Jesus Christ, the "beginning of the creation of God," longs to enter the heart and reveal not merely our emptiness but His fullness—His answers. He wants to bring a feast of love with Him. He pleads that we may understand why He sends us the message of reproof. Says He, "As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten."¹⁹

May we suggest, dear reader, that you kneel before the Lord who is "the beginning of the creation of God" and ask Him to begin a new experience in your life. He is waiting. He is pleading. He is knocking at the door. Why not cease the self-fellowshipping kind of service that leaves the soul "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked"? Why not invite the One in who creates new hearts, new lives, new attitudes, and new homes? Why not ask Him to take over. We all need to ask Him to give us the humble and teachable spirit. Then it will be true of us that "he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."²⁰

As we plead with you, dear reader, we also are weeping out our own needs, opening anew our own hearts. Now having recommitted our hearts to our Lord, having accepted His new creation within us by faith, why not confess our faults

to our mates, rather than seeking to exact from them a confession of their guilt? It can do wonders if we will but let our Redeemer, who is none other than the Source or "the beginning of the creation of God," take over. He promises to answer when we seek with all our hearts.²¹

Wretchedness will flee. Self-pity will evaporate. The agony that comes by self-serving will melt away, and the emptiness of Christless satisfaction will be filled with Him, whom to know is life eternal.

As we are often driven to our knees with the prayer that our Lord will create again and again right impulses within us and that we may "die daily," so you, dear one, may do the same. Please do not just sit there and read—fall down just now and claim His promise, "I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me."

Dear Lord, "the beginning of the creation of God," I ask You to come into my life at this moment and bring me Your fellowship. Mighty Creator and Redeemer, I ask You to "create in me a clean heart . . . and renew a right spirit within me." I believe that You are effecting this transformation. And I thankfully receive You personally for the answer. In Your blessed name, Amen.

PLEADING CHRIST

Laodicea's Christ

Pleads with us lukewarm men.

Jesus is faithful, true,

He is the great Amen.

Thou art both wretched, blind;

Naked and poor thou art;

I am the Source of life,

Waiting to change thy heart.

If thou wilt open the door,

Quickly I'll enter in;

I will bring thee a feast—

Cleanse thee from every sin.

Then shalt thou overcome—

Never be left alone.

Thou shalt sit down with me,

Ever to share my throne.

Reflection: As we bring this chapter to a close, may we suggest that you or your prayer circle prayerfully consider the seven great Bible facts following. You may wish to discuss the attitude Lucy should have had toward her Lord.

1. The first Bible picture of our Lord is that of Creator. "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth" (Genesis 1:1).

2. The memorial of His creation is the worship day—the seventh day (Genesis 2:1-3).

3. We are to "commit the keeping of" our "souls to him . . . as unto a faithful Creator" (1 Peter 4:19).

4. The Bible gives many pictures of our Lord. Among these is that He is "the beginning of the creation of God" (Revelation 3:14).

5. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature" (2 Corinthians 5:17).

6. God promises, "A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you" (Ezekiel 36:26).

7. He promised us "And all things, whatsoever ye shall ask in prayer, believing, ye shall receive" (Matthew 21:22).

References:

1. Revelation 3:14.
2. Revelation 3:18.
3. Psalm 139:23, 24.
4. 2 Corinthians 1:20.
5. See 1 Peter 3:1-3.
6. Revelation 3:18.
7. 1 Corinthians 13:5.
8. Revelation 3:18.
9. Isaiah 64:6.
10. Ezekiel 36:26.
11. Revelation 3:14.
12. See Colossians 4:16.
13. See Ezekiel 36:26.
14. 1 Peter 4:19.
15. Ezekiel 36:26, 27.
16. Revelation 3:20.
17. Romans 8:9.
18. 2 Corinthians 5:17.
19. Revelation 3:19.
20. Luke 14:11.
21. See Jeremiah 29:13.

19

Uncle Takes His Gun to Church

The chain reaction of one lone man's first taking his stand for the light of Christ.

A rumor had gone around town. A tent was to be pitched in the area, and the ministers who were to speak at that tent were Sabbath keepers. But the rumor carried with it much more than this. It suggested that the people who were in charge of the tent might be dangerous.

There was an air of expectancy when the tent came in on the wagon and the helpers began to erect it in the area where my grandmother Highby and my uncle Le Roy lived.

Grandmother Highby was a godly Methodist. But my uncle Le Roy was not a Christian. Perhaps out of curiosity more than anything else he decided to attend the meetings which were to begin the following Sunday night. Uncle Le Roy had a good shotgun, and he was a good marksman.

Hence, on the first night he stood at a distance of perhaps one hundred feet, his gun at his side.

As Uncle Le Roy stood there outside the tent, the neighbors entered apparently unafraid. They took seats after receiving songbooks.

In a few moments a gentleman walked onto the platform and at the same time a lady sat down at the piano. The gentleman asked people to open the songbooks

and then led the audience in singing some good old-fashioned gospel songs.

After perhaps fifteen minutes of singing, a minister stepped onto the platform and, after another song, he prayed. Soon he was preaching from the Holy Bible. Uncle Le Roy decided after that service that it would not be necessary to take his shotgun with him.

He had discovered that these Sabbath-keepers were not at all as rumor had pictured them.

Most of us Christians know that rumor, gossip, and talebearing are instruments of the evil one. They are calculated to precede the actual facts, so as to prejudice the mind. By this means it is often difficult for the hearer of false rumor to accept truth. The preconceived opinions have clogged the channel of the heart and mind. This is why the court selects jurors who have not formed an opinion before the presentation of facts, so that the jurors will not reject the facts.

Yet talebearing is indulged by tens of thousands of professed followers of Christ. Instead of going directly to the one concerning whom they have heard some questionable rumor, Satan causes them to whisper what they have heard to another and still another. In some cases it is years before the truth is known. This is one reason why it is so important for all who love the Lord not to listen to "tales." Jesus Christ has commanded us to go to him alone¹ if we have some question concerning the behavior of another.

Quite frequently dishonest people spread tales as Satan did in heaven. The Bible speaks of the "multitude of thy merchandise," "the multitude of thine iniquities" and "the iniquity of thy traffick." It was thus that Satan "defiled" his "sanctuaries."² This traffic is still talebearing. He is "the accuser of our brethren."³ And he was a liar from the beginning.⁴

It was Satan who accused a man by the name of Job. Even though Satan could find no fault in him, he refused to acknowledge that Job was motivated by any principle other than selfishness. Therefore he continually accuses both God and man. God rebuked Satan for his accusations against Joshua the high priest.⁵ And He rebukes all today who while professing His name engage in evil speaking. God's plan for settling misunderstandings is made very plain in the Scriptures. Also He has a plan by which the innocent may be protected. He says, "Debate thy cause with thy neighbour himself; and discover not a secret to another."⁶ He specifically commands, "Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people; neither shalt thou stand against the blood of thy neighbour; I am the Lord."⁷

As an example of the unworthy rumors which even Christian people often circulate, I recall a minister whose fellowship I had come to appreciate. He was of another church, but we had enjoyed Christian fellowship together.

One day we were discussing a certain denomination. He made a statement that

I knew was not factual. So as kindly and diplomatically as I could I corrected him. Whereupon I received a shock.

He replied with a scoff. "It does not make any difference whether this particular thing is true or not—they are guilty of so many errors anyway."

I thought to myself, so the fact that a man is in error gives us authority to accuse him of things of which he is *not* guilty! To the upright Christian there is no question as to the source of this philosophy!

Back to Uncle Le Roy. He was naturally surprised that the ministers conducting this series of meetings were not dangerous men as the rumors had indicated. Instead, he sensed the presence of the Holy Spirit as the meetings continued.

And this was not all. He observed that not merely was the spirit of the ministers Christlike, their sermons were all directly from the Bible. They gave Bible proof for every doctrine. My uncle finally decided to dust off his old unused Bible and double-check everything that was presented. As night after night the meetings continued, Uncle Le Roy discovered that not once was there an exception to this principle—these men always used the Bible. They did not twist texts of Scripture. Their explanations were simple. There was no difficulty in following the thoughts.

But when the ministers presented the question of the New Testament Sabbath, my uncle was to receive the biggest shock of all. It was that the glorious resurrection of our Lord is to be memorialized not by keeping a day but by the sacred rite of baptism and the new life.⁸

Among those who had innocently kept the wrong day was my Methodist grandmother. A more devoted Christian could not be found anywhere. She really kept Sunday. No button could be sewn on a garment on that day. God recognized and honored her love and her faith. As stated elsewhere she was in no way a lesser Christian because she had misunderstood which day of the week was the true Sabbath.

When Uncle Le Roy heard the Bible truth regarding the weekly Sabbath, he was of course amazed. Many sincere men and women, upon hearing or reading this truth, find it almost incredible.

Uncle Le Roy was a backslider. But he was sincere. He had lost his hold on God, but he was possessed of an integrity that would not be swayed either by emotion or rumor. He would bear it through. He would study it through.

It was not difficult for Uncle Le Roy to find all the texts of Scripture which deal with the first day of the week in the New Testament. There are only eight. And the ministers at the tent opened their Bibles and read each one. This gave Uncle Le Roy the opportunity of seeing for himself what these texts of Scripture teach.

He discovered that most of these texts refer to the events on the very day on which Christ was resurrected. But he also found to his utter astonishment that

far from celebrating Christ's resurrection that day, His disciples did not so much as believe that He had risen.⁹

He also discovered that the reference to the first day of the week in Acts 20 was not to a regular worship service but to a farewell service on Saturday night with Paul "ready to depart on the morrow."¹⁰ And to the rumor that this must have been a celebration of the Lord's resurrection, Uncle Le Roy discovered that the breaking of the bread does not make a day a Sabbath. In those days they broke bread every day from house to house.¹¹ The institution of the Lord's Supper took place, not on a Sunday, but the night before Christ was crucified. Being crucified on Friday,¹² Christ instituted the Lord's Supper, the holy communion, not on Sunday but Thursday night.¹³

Uncle Le Roy also learned for the first time in his life that Bible days begin and end at sunset, not at midnight as the civil day does. God said, "from even unto even, shall ye celebrate your sabbaths."¹⁴ The "even" is "when the sun did set."¹⁵ Therefore Uncle Le Roy saw that a midnight service as recorded in Acts 20 could not possibly have been conducted Sunday night, but actually Saturday night. Paul had preached that day in all probability as his custom was.¹⁶ He was to leave the next morning. They had a farewell service that night. This amazed my uncle. Here he found Bible facts never before revealed to his sincere mind. There was no mention of first-day sacredness anywhere in the Bible.

Another text was read at the tent. Nothing pertaining to the first day was overlooked. It was First Corinthians 16:2. My uncle clearly saw that these ministers were not "handling the word of God deceitfully"; but, as Paul stated, "by manifestation of the truth commending ourselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God."¹⁷ It was seen from the reading of this text of Scripture (1 Corinthians 16:2) that the apostle Paul was going up to Jerusalem. He wished to take with him a gift for these poor brethren. So he asked each brother to "lay by him in store" a certain sum each Sunday morning. Uncle Le Roy clearly saw that this was not a church gathering. It was rather the setting aside of a certain amount of money "as God had prospered him."

Jesus said that we will have the poor with us always. And the Holy Word of God declares, "He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given will he pay him again."¹⁸ Again it says, "He that hath mercy on the poor, happy is he."¹⁹ In harmony with this principle of God in the days of Israel, the poor were to be privileged to glean the harvests of their brethren.²⁰

I recall back in my Sabbath-keeping father's home that this principle was conscientiously followed. We had in our home what was called a "first-day offering box." In this box each Sunday morning my Christian father placed an offering for the poor. It helped us to remember that "he that hath a bountiful eye shall be blessed; for he giveth of his bread to the poor."²¹ How can a man

represent a generous Maker and still be stingy with his poor brother? It is true that oftentimes the poor need counsel on how to save money, how to be frugal, and how to economize more than they need money. But this attitude of generosity is part of the gospel of Jesus Christ. I recall how my father opened his business ledgers to learn how God had "prospered him" the week before and then remembered the poor.

So Uncle Le Roy came to study the last text of Scripture which many Christians suppose to refer to the first day of the week. He was surprised to find that the first day of the week is not even mentioned. The text is Revelation 1:10. It states, "I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day." Uncle Le Roy discovered that this text does not say which day of the week is the Lord's day. He would have to turn to other texts to discover to which day the text of Scripture refers.

Sure enough, he found many texts of Scripture that show that the Lord's holy day is the seventh. It is in both the Old and New Testaments. In the Old Testament Scriptures the Lord calls the Sabbath "my holy day."²² In the commandment He says that the seventh day is the Sabbath "of the Lord."²³ And in the New Testament Jesus declared that he Himself is "Lord . . . of the Sabbath."²⁴ More than this, Uncle Le Roy discovered that there was no text of Scripture that calls any other day of the week "my holy day" or "the sabbath of the Lord thy God." So that makes it easy to locate the holy day.

The word "Sabbath," Uncle Le Roy learned, means *rest*. He discovered that the New Testament is not silent as to which is the rest day. "He spake in a certain place of the seventh day on this wise. And God did rest the seventh day from all his works."²⁵

Uncle Le Roy could praise the Lord that he had not been prejudiced by the untrue rumors to such an extent that he did not listen. He was like the Bereans of old. Of them we read: "These were more noble than those in Thessalonica, in that they received the word with all readiness of mind, and searched the scriptures daily, whether those things were so."²⁶

What is the memorial of Christ's resurrection? Uncle Le Roy was not long to wait. The Scriptures are very clear on how this glorious event is to be memorialized. The apostle Peter under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit states in simplest language what God's memorial of the resurrection really is: "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ."²⁷

Uncle Le Roy read from the pen of the apostle Paul, "Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in

the newness of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin."²⁸

To the Colossians Paul stated the same truth: "Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead."²⁹

And to the non-Christian who was giving his heart to Christ in the jail at Philippi, Paul explained the way of salvation through Jesus Christ. He then baptized him with his own hands.³⁰

Philip, the evangelist, was led by the Holy Spirit to follow the same procedure, with the eunuch believer after he had "preached unto him Jesus." "They came unto a certain water: and the eunuch said, See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? And Philip said, If thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest. And he answered and said, I believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. And he commanded the chariot to stand still: and they went down both into the water, both Philip and the eunuch: and he baptized him. And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing."³¹

The apostle Paul also baptized those who had at one time been baptized previously, but had now received glorious new truth.³²

The minister at the tent had done what was commanded by the Lord: "Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth."³³ There was no confusion now. Uncle Le Roy saw that the seventh day of the week is the Sabbath of the Lord, memorializing the creation of the world and God's rest that followed.³⁴ Baptism by immersion is the memorial of Christ's resurrection from the dead and our rising to newness of life.³⁵

To say that Uncle Le Roy was delighted with the simplicity of the Bible truth is not exaggerating. He wanted everyone to know what he had learned.

When he hurried over to Grandmother Highby's home, he told of the wonderful things he had heard at the tent. But Grandmother had not attended the meetings.

She had not seen with her eyes the Scriptures read. She had not heard with her own ears the words of truth so simply uttered. It was impossible for her at that point so much as to understand Uncle Le Roy's enthusiastic response.

Consequently when Uncle Le Roy began to tell what he had learned, and not being versed yet in the correct way to share it, Grandmother was turned off. She did appreciate deeply Uncle Le Roy's change of life. He was actually a new creature in Christ Jesus. Old habits of sin had gone. His whole personality had

changed. Yet Grandmother had not passed through the night-by-night experience which had been Uncle Le Roy's.

Uncle Le Roy should have been instructed on how to share what he had learned. He should have been told to move wisely and sympathetically and humbly. But in this enthusiasm he probably said a lot of things that sounded like sanctimony. I do not profess to know all he told Grandmother, but I do know that after she had heard several hours of this "preaching," she decided that it was enough.

Whenever she saw him coming toward the house, she got up from her chair and made her way upstairs as quickly as her feet would carry her. She gave orders that she was not to be disturbed. This would give her quiet from a new man in Christ Jesus, whose enthusiasm over Bible truth she misunderstood.

But my grandmother, as stated earlier, was a devout child of God. She had walked with the Lord much longer than had Uncle Le Roy. And while she was upset at his overly enthusiastic approach and wanted to avoid it, she did not want to avoid the truth. In her upstairs room she studied and prayed. At first I think it was mostly in the hope of straightening out Uncle Le Roy. Then failing to find the texts of Scripture that she thought were there in the Bible, she began to study for herself.

How happy she was that no one could disturb her or understand the trauma through which she was passing in her attempt to find the texts of Scripture that she felt sure were there. The more she searched the more apparent it became that the text she was looking for was not in the Bible.

As the weeks passed, Grandmother Highby began to come to some conclusions too. Being a woman of deep integrity, she would not assume a thing to be scriptural unless she could find it in the Holy Book once it had been challenged. So her search continued.

Finally, after weeks of earnest prayer and searching, Grandmother came to the same conclusion as had Uncle Le Roy. When she announced her findings to the rest of the family, including her teen-age daughter, Emma, they also studied prayerfully. There was nothing left for her and the children to do but to follow the light of truth. The fact that her parents and grandparents had kept the first day of the week for centuries had no bearing since she had discovered the mistake that had been made. "But I said unto their children in the wilderness, Walk ye not in the statutes of your fathers . . . : I am the Lord your God; walk in my statutes."³⁶

Now Grandmother and her daughters were to pass through a similar experience with Grandfather Highby as Uncle Le Roy had had with her. Grandfather was a most industrious man. He was a noble and honest man. Yet it was years before he saw the light. But when he did, he also yielded to the sweet voice of conscience and was baptized.

In the meantime Grandfather Highby took a strong stand against his children's going to a Sabbath-keeping school. He was adamant in his decision not to give them financial support. He told Emma, a beautiful and dedicated nineteen-year-old lassie, that if she went to any other school he would finance her. Then with solemn voice that spoke for itself, he repeated, "If you go to that Sabbath-keeping school, you will pay your own way."

As Emma prayed earnestly over the matter, she felt that the Lord would take care of her if she launched out by faith and started going to the Sabbath-keeping school at Rome, New York. The Lord who had worked such miracles in the life of Uncle Le Roy could support her in the area of finances. So she made her decision, left home, and entered the school that trained Christian workers.

Not too long after entering this school, Emma came in contact in her classes with a young man studying for the ministry. His name was Charles S. Coon. He had recently lost his wife and had left his little boy Arthur with his grandparents while he returned to prepare for the gospel ministry.

As the weeks came and went, Charles and Emma became acquainted. Emma felt that this completely dedicated man who had become interested in her should not be repulsed. It seemed that the Lord impressed her to continue the friendship. Gradually the friendship in Christ matured into courtship and finally into marriage. I am the seventh son of this union.

As I have stated in other works, Mother placed her hands on her abdomen before the birth of us boys and dedicated us to the work of God.

Father, though having received a ministerial license from the New York Conference, decided against going into full-time ministry. He feared that his rapidly growing family would be neglected if he traveled as most ministers of that time did. He felt that it would be unfair not to stay by his children. He must teach them the way of the Lord. And that he did.

I do not recall one day in all my sixteen years at home that Father failed to call his children around for family worship morning and night and often at noon. He spent much time with the Lord in Bible study and prayer. We boys have repeatedly gone out to the barn where Father was working and, unbeknown to him, heard him praying aloud to the God he loved and worshiped. How earnestly he prayed that the Lord would keep him and his family true to the cross of Christ.

What an active participant was Mother. In other works we have related how she led us to the cross of Christ as she related the gospel story. How our hearts burned within us as she pictured the life, the agony, and the death of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. How the Holy Spirit burned her messages into our very souls, as she exclaimed again and again, "You have a very special mission in life." That message with her earnest countenance made an impact that we shall never forget.

Then came the dream of my drowning brother and God's midnight call to me to enter the ministry—to save souls to the cause of Christ. In other words I have related how, after that experience, I have walked down country roads burdened for the salvation of the occupants of those homes. Later I worked the streets of cities, pleading with God to help me to help people find the precious Lord Jesus who suffered, bled, and died that we might live—and who is now in glory land interceding for us before the throne of the Majesty on high.

Five of us brothers became ministers of the gospel. Today as we look back—those of us who are still living—we thank our Lord from the depths of our hearts that Emma Highby, as a nineteen-year-old lass, refused to be dissuaded from attending a Christian school. How we praise God that she would not, could not, yield even to the entreaties and then the hardening of a father, who up to that point had not yet known the Lord. How our hearts go out to God in gratefulness to each one along the line that led Emma Highby to make her decision for Christ.

We do not know the name of the minister who pitched that tent so many years ago. But what a joy it will be to meet and greet him and his associates in glory land! What a thrill to go trooping through the gates to the New Jerusalem washed in the blood of the Lamb, "in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins." "For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him."³⁷

Little did Emma Highby dream that so many of her sons would be serving as ministers of the gospel of Jesus Christ. Little did she dream when making that decision for Christ that tens of thousands would be learning of Jesus Christ through her sons.

And little do you, dear reader, know what may be the fruit of your decision to go all the way with Jesus Christ. No one in this life can know the ever-widening effects of one life completely surrendered to our Lord.

I invite you, dear one, trembling one, frightened one, to look to my Jesus, who died a cruel death that you might have life. I invite you to surrender all to Him at this moment. Fall at His nail-pierced feet and cry out.

"All to Jesus I surrender,

All to Him I freely give."

When my father passed away, we sons of his (all but one who had passed away) formed a circle around his grave. We held hands. We knelt in solemn consecration and dedication. We yielded afresh our lives to meet him in glory land. Mother was then in the circle. She lived for many years after his passing. She was almost 102 years of age when she passed to her rest awaiting the call of the life-giver. What a great reunion day when we meet again! By God's grace it won't be long.

Dear Lord, we cry out with the apostle Paul, "Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ."³⁸ We ask believingly that this promise will be fulfilled in each of us, and we return thanks that we have received in the precious name of Jesus Christ, our Lord. Amen.

REWARDING SAVIOUR

Oh, rewarding Saviour,
Praise belongs to Thee;
Faithful Thou Creator
For redeeming me.

Thou hast turned our forebear's
Hearts to follow on
In the law of Jesus,
God's beloved Son.

Ne'er could persecution
Crush their spirits brave,
Nor could condemnation
Their allegiance wane.

Give us strength to follow,
So that by Thy grace
We may meet in heaven—
See our Saviour's face.

Reflection: We, the authors of this book render heartfelt praise to our Lord for giving the courage and strength to Emma Highby, later Emma Coon, for remembering her Creator in the days of her youth.³⁹ We suggest that you, our readers, whether in a prayer circle or all alone, give, either for the first time or in rededication, your heart completely to the Lord. As you do this, you will receive a rich reward.

As we conclude this intriguing account, we present the following scriptures:

1. Our Lord warns His followers, "Thou shalt not go up and down as a talebearer among thy people" (Leviticus 19:16).
2. This is because "the words of a talebearer are as wounds" (Proverbs 18:8).
3. Those to whom the talebearer wishes to confide are told to "meddle not" (Proverbs 20:19).

4. If we have differences between ourselves and another, Jesus tells us to "go and tell him . . . alone" (Matthew 18:15).

5. The Ethiopian eunuch, after accepting Christ, said, "See, here is water; what doth hinder me to be baptized? . . . And he [Philip] baptized him" (Acts 8:36-38).

6. "The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God,) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 3:21).

7. While we are to honor our parents in the Lord, yet we must never permit any human authority to keep us from following our Lord, for we must "obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29).

References:

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| 1. See Matthew 18:15-18. | 37. Colossians 1:14, 16. |
| 2. Ezekiel 28:16-18. | 38. Philippians 1:6. |
| 3. Revelation 12:10. | 39. See Ecclesiastes 12:1. |
| 4. See John 8:44. | |
| 5. See Zechariah 3:1, 2. | |
| 6. Proverbs 25:9. | |
| 7. Leviticus 19:16. | |
| 8. See 1 Peter 3:21; Romans 6:1-5; Acts 8:36-39. | |
| 9. See Mark 16:2, 9-11. | |
| 10. Acts 20:7. | |
| 11. See Acts 2:46. | |
| 12. See Luke 23:54-56. | |
| 13. See 1 Corinthians 11:23-25. | |
| 14. Leviticus 23:32. | |
| 15. Mark 1:32. | |
| 16. See Acts 17:2. | |
| 17. 2 Corinthians 4:2. | |
| 18. Proverbs 19:17. | |
| 19. Proverbs 14:21. | |
| 20. See Leviticus 19:10; Deuteronomy 24:21. | |
| 21. Proverbs 22:9. | |
| 22. Isaiah 58:13. | |
| 23. Exodus 20:8-11. | |
| 24. Mark 2:27, 28. | |
| 25. Hebrews 4:4. | |
| 26. Acts 17:11. | |
| 27. 1 Peter 3:21. | |
| 28. Romans 6:3-6. | |
| 29. Colossians 2:12. | |
| 30. See Acts 16:31-33. | |
| 31. Acts 8:31-39. | |
| 32. See Acts 19:3-5. | |
| 33. 2 Timothy 2:15. | |
| 34. Genesis 2:1-3; Exodus 20:8-11. | |
| 35. Romans 8:11. | |
| 36. Ezekiel 20:18, 19. | |

20 This Is It!

*How man may pass from the hell of guilt
to a lavish heaven of forgiveness.*

Merwin Whitehead was thoroughly discouraged. His wife Myra had left him. He worked on the holy worship day every other week, and his church had censured him for breaking the commandments. And besides that he had some bad habits.

Then he went across the border to the next state and met a pastor who had recently learned about the ABC's of Bible prayer. The minister, Pastor Wright, had witnessed a miracle only a few weeks before. Pastor Wright's wife had had low-blood sugar. Her condition had been growing worse as the months came and went. Then at our camp meeting she claimed a Bible promise for healing and has seen no sign of ill health since.

So when Merwin Whitehead met Pastor Wright, he was to learn about righteousness by faith, not by works.

The Bible says, "For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works."¹

Merwin, like so many Christians, up to that time had had the wrong concept of

obedience. He felt that obeying was a sort of do-it-yourself procedure. He did not understand that both justification and sanctification are ours only by faith.

Justification by faith means that we are accounted "just" through faith in Jesus Christ. Up to that particular point we are forgiven all past sins. We have the covering of Christ's righteousness. God, instead of looking at our past life of sin, sees, by choice, only the perfect life of obedience of Jesus Christ, His Son. Dr. Young, in his *Analytical Concordance to the Bible*, defines the word "justify" as used in the New Testament as "to make or declare right." When, therefore, our Lord justifies us, He declares us right or righteous.

Yes, this justification comes by faith.² It is of grace.³ We are justified by His blood⁴ in the name of the Lord Jesus.⁵ Justification is absolutely free.⁶ It comes through simply believing in Jesus.⁷

When a sinner confesses his sins, he is forgiven and cleansed.⁸ His past life is covered.⁹ The great apostle Paul calls this act of covering *imputed* righteousness. "Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin."¹⁰

This imputed righteousness does not come by works. "For what saith the scripture? Abraham believed God, and it was counted unto him for righteousness. Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness."¹¹

If we could work off our debt of sin by acts of righteousness, it would no longer be of faith but of works.

The holy Sabbath day stands for a believing rest in Jesus rather than the working off a debt.¹² And the ABC's of prayer are God's way of making the sinner righteous. *A* is *ask* (Matthew 7:7). *B* is *believe* (Mark 11:24). *C* is *claim* or *receive* (Matthew 21:22; John 11:41).

Back to Merwin Whitehead: Pastor Wright, as they sat together, came right to the point. He explained to Merwin that Sabbath keeping is not of works but of rest. "For he that is entered into his rest, he also *hath ceased from his own works*, as God did from his."¹³ But there is a struggle, a fight of faith to enter into God's rest. Said the great apostle, "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold of eternal life."¹⁴ And again, "Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief."¹⁵

To believe that God will do what our own efforts and wisdom see as impossible involves the fight of faith. So it was with Merwin Whitehead. Pastor Wright suggested, "Let us kneel right down here and believe God's promise to take care of you. And then all you have to do is to notify your employer that you will not be reporting for work on the Sabbath. God will do the rest. It is God's business to provide your living. Your business, your part, is simply to believe."

Pastor Wright and Merwin knelt together and claimed the promise of Matthew 6:33, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness: and all these things shall be added unto you." They asked God to supply for Merwin his material and physical need, for he had made God first in his life. They told God that they believed just as Jesus instructed. "Therefore I say unto you, What things soever ye desire, when ye pray, believe that ye receive them, and ye shall have them."¹⁶ They prayed as Jesus our Saviour did at the grave of Lazarus—they thanked God that they had received the answer to their prayers. He said, "Father, I thank thee that thou hast heard me."¹⁷

Merwin Whitehead left the Pastor's home trembling but determined to put the promise of God to the test in simple faith. The next morning he approached his employer: "I cannot work next Saturday. It is the Sabbath of the Lord." The employer misunderstood. He thought Merwin was telling him that he was going to quit his job.

"We want you to stay with us," the employer exclaimed.

"I want to remain," Merwin replied, "but I cannot work anymore on the seventh day of the week. It is the Lord's holy Sabbath day."

Relieved that Merwin was not going to quit his job, the employer replied, "Oh, we will gladly let you off on your worship day."

"But it has to be every Saturday," Merwin emphasized, "not just every other Saturday as theretofore."

"I understand," his employer replied once again, relieved that he could still retain the excellent services of such a valued workman.

When Merwin walked out of the employer's office and down the hallway, he could scarcely believe what had transpired. It was so easily done once he really believed God and took Jesus Christ at His word to add all the temporal necessities.

"I can hardly believe it! It does not seem possible! Why, it works!" Merwin said almost out loud as he walked briskly down the hallway and out to his car.

Merwin could wait no longer to telephone Pastor Wright and share the good news with him. "Pastor Wright, it works. I can hardly believe it. I have my Sabbaths off! God has answered our prayer!"

"All right," replied Pastor Wright, "now how about coming over, and we shall claim another promise of the Lord. This time it will be for the reunion of you and your wife from whom you are separated."

Merwin lost no time in getting over to the pastor's home. They fell on their knees once again and claimed another Bible promise. It was for what the Lord would do. It was not of their works, but of the Lord's. He promises to supply all our need.¹⁸ Merwin needed a restored home, and God had made him fit for his wife to live with as a new creature.¹⁹

For a week or two the pastor heard nothing of Merwin. Then someone called Pastor Wright on the telephone and said that Mr. and Mrs. Whitehead were in a little church a few miles distant that Sabbath day. "Mr. and Mrs. Whitehead?" the pastor asked in astonishment. Now it was his turn to be amazed at the rapidity with which the Lord answered their prayer.

Pastor Wright gave us this report, just as we worked on this chapter. I did not have my tape recorder turned on as we usually do for such experiences so cannot give every detail correctly. The pastor is many miles from here besides, but I believe he also told me that Merwin had also claimed a Bible promise for victory over tobacco and this prayer was likewise granted.

The next time Pastor Wright met Merwin he asked about his wife's returning. Flated Merwin replied, "It happened this way: She called me on the telephone and asked if she could come home. I said 'Yes, come, of course.' And she packed up, and I went over and got her. When I went to pick her up, the time was extremely limited, so I asked the Lord to help us sell off in one day the furnishings as it would be wiser to purchase where I lived than to move the furniture. We put a price on the furniture. A man came in and paid us double the price I had placed on the things."

My friends, righteousness means rightdoing. And Merwin's rightdoing was by simple faith in the promises of our Lord.

Forgiveness for sin is a gift. So is repentance.²⁰ Also the new heart.²¹ Victory too.²² Eternal life is likewise the free gift of our Lord.²³ These gifts are all received by faith.²⁴ All the rightdoing we receive comes from the One of whom Scripture speaks, "It is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."²⁵ Then we can reply in simple childlike faith, "I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me."²⁶

No, we do not obey God in order to pay the debt of sin. Christ died for our sins.²⁷ He exchanges His righteousness for our unrighteousness.²⁸ And that exchange is freely offered through Jesus Christ our Lord. According to *Dr. Young's Analytical Concordance to the Bible*, one of the Greek words translated "believe" is also sometimes translated "obey." To believe in God's power is the only way a sinner can obey.

"For me to live is Christ."²⁹ "I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me."³⁰

The change from the carnal to the spiritual nature is not accomplished by man's efforts or caprice. "For though thou wash thee with nitre, and take thee much soap, yet thine iniquity is marked before me, saith the Lord God."³¹ "For we know that the law is spiritual; but I am carnal, sold under sin. For that which I do I allow not for what I would, that do I not; but what I hate, that do I. If then I

do that which I would not, I consent unto the law that it is good. Now then it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me."³²

The holy Sabbath day was given 2000 years before the law was written on tables of stone. It was presented in the Garden of Eden before sin raised its haughty head.³³ It represents the creative power of God.³⁴ "He spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast."³⁵ So the holy worship day stands, not for puny man's power to obey, but for the Creator's power. He alone, therefore, can create "a clean heart, . . . and renew a right spirit within" us.³⁶ There is therefore not one trace of legalism in the true concept of the keeping of God's holy worship day. The Sabbath came before sin, and it will continue when all the redeemed live in the new heavens and the new earth.³⁷

Thousands of men and women and boys and girls everywhere are finding the power of our Lord as the only source of obedience to the command to keep His holy day.

There was Bud. He heard our story of the young couple who had a two week honeymoon with pay. He also heard of the gentleman whose salary was tripled after he began trusting the Lord in simple faith to keep the Lord's holy day.

"I have an experience that surpasses that one," Bud exclaimed, his face beaming. Then he told of how he had a good paying position in the city of Chicago. But because of circumstances he could not continue the job.

He began looking for other positions. Several opened wide with better pay than the one he had given up. There was only one catch—he would have to work on the Sabbath. But he could not consent to disobeying his Lord. In simple faith he prayed earnestly. He believed that God would provide his needs as he continued trusting God. "He that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him."³⁸

Bud believed in God, and he believed "the just shall live by faith."³⁹ Repeatedly he was offered good-paying jobs if he would only work on God's holy worship day. But how can a trusting soul compromise? He believed that with God all things are possible. How could it be otherwise with a Creator by whose word "were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth"?⁴⁰

Bud fought "the good fight of faith"⁴¹ for several weeks. Then another position opened. "Today," said Bud, "God is giving me four times as much money as I received in the job I gave up in order to keep God's holy Sabbath day." To rest completely on the seventh day given over by the world to rat-race commercialism one must first rest in God. But Bud found that rest.

The holy Sabbath day stands for justification; for the life of Jesus, our Creator, is imputed to us. The Sabbath points the way to sanctification; for our new life is one of holy living.⁴² In fact, our total redemption through the blood of Christ is

based on creation—for which the Lord's holy day is the memorial.

Writes the great apostle, "In whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of sins [justification]." "For [because] by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him and for him."⁴³ A new heart experience [sanctification] is only possible through creation.⁴⁴

Take another example of both justification and sanctification by faith. It is that of Mr. and Mrs. Blue. These dear people had heard a series of evangelistic meetings we had held in their city. They had invited us to their lovely home. Mrs. Blue and Carrol, their teen-age daughter, asked many questions. I tried to answer the questions with a Bible answer, praying that God would make it clear to them. Mr. Blue sat there and slept much of the time. When he woke up, he assented to all he had heard—which I didn't think was very much.

Sometimes our Bible studies extended far into the night. We were always refreshed as we left the Blue home. One reason was that the youthful Carrol was fully as enthusiastic about the Bible truth as was her mother. We weren't too sure about Mr. Blue. Often when we glanced in his direction during the studies, he appeared to be sleeping. Yet he was clearly agreeing with what we were teaching. So it went for weeks. Mrs. Blue seemed somewhat embarrassed that her husband fell asleep so easily. She explained that he worked hard, and it was difficult for him to stay awake when he relaxed.

Before many weeks passed, Mr. and Mrs. Blue and Carrol all professed faith in the Lord Jesus Christ as their Saviour and requested baptism in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.⁴⁵ My wife and I were very happy for their commitment.

During this period of study Mrs. Blue came sometimes every day seeking our prayers for victory over tobacco. She wanted more than forgiveness—justification. She prayed for sanctification—a holy life. We spent many hours with her, endeavoring to share with her the power of Christ. We made clear that it was not a matter of making resolutions, alone. They are like ropes of sand. We must come to God like little children—that is, in childlike faith. We must receive from His hands what He is eager to bestow—both forgiveness (justification) and cleansing (sanctification).⁴⁶

I tried to help Mrs. Blue understand that our part is to ask, believe, and receive. God's part is to give. When we rely on our own power, we're sure to fail. "Christ Jesus . . . is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption."⁴⁷ Only as we believe and act on His promises can we be "his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works."⁴⁸

These promises are as firm as Calvary itself. It was there that the new

covenant promises were sealed by the blood of Jesus Christ.⁴⁹ This is the blood by which we have been redeemed.⁵⁰ The blood that sealed the new covenant⁵¹ and cleanses us from all sin,⁵² which has been confessed.⁵³

Moreover, it is because of the conditions of the new covenant that we are Sabbath keepers; for the new covenant, the New Testament, Christ's last will and testament, could never be changed or added to after He died.⁵⁴ Thus the keeping of a day other than the seventh could not possibly be a part of the New Testament or new covenant. Jesus closed His testament when He died. This is why, after carefully studying all the New Testament texts where the first day of the week is mentioned, the Blue family discovered that there was no transfer of the sacred blessing from the seventh day to another day of the week.

The Bible makes clear that baptism and the new life along with the Lord's Supper are memorials of Christ's death, burial, and resurrection.⁵⁵

These sacraments were instituted *before* Christ's death on the cross.⁵⁶ They are therefore part of the new covenant, for nothing could be added to His will and testament after His death—just as no man's will and testament can be added to after death seals it.

Every true Christian is a spiritual Jew or Israelite.⁵⁷ (Israel is a spiritual name meaning "overcomer." The seventh day is a sign between God and Israel.⁵⁸ It is therefore the sign of new covenant Christians.)

When the three members of the Blue family accepted all they had been taught, they were baptized. As stated earlier, we had some misgivings, however, regarding Mr. Blue's knowledge of the faith, since he had slept so much during the studies. But he went along with plans for baptism.

Months passed, perhaps a full year. Then we learned of the sanctifying power of Christ that had taken place in Mr. Blue's life during that period before baptism.

Unbeknown to any of us, as well as to Mrs. Blue, he had become involved with a young woman. Before he was baptized, however, he had a heart-to-heart visit with her. He told her that their affair was now ended. He explained that he had given his heart to the Lord, and he was going to be true to his wife. The young woman tried both her charms and her tears, but all to no avail. Mr. Blue was determined. By simple faith in Christ he was a new covenant Christian. "If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature."⁵⁹

Although Mr. Blue had slept much of the time as we studied together, the Holy Spirit had awakened his soul to righteousness—righteousness by faith. God had written His holy law in Mr. Blue's heart,⁶⁰ not merely the fourth commandment, but the seventh commandment and all the rest.

That is exactly what He promises to do when we accept Him by faith. God had given him a new heart and caused him to walk in His statutes.⁶¹ But faith in

Christ is rewarded in restoring backsliders too. Let us share an example.

Years after the Blue family were baptized we were called to conduct a series of studies at a Christian college. It was the spring Week of Prayer. Carrol Blue, who had so eagerly accepted Christ, was now a student at this college. She had, however, become discouraged and had backslidden. We were looking forward to seeing Carrol after years of separation. While she loved us personally, she was ashamed of her own spiritual condition.

But there are new covenant promises for backsliders, and they are so beautiful. One goes like this: "I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely."⁶² Another is "If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he [God] shall give him life."⁶³ The Christian life of righteousness is a free gift.⁶⁴

The college assigned us an office for personal interviews during that week. Students came in as they usually do at a time like this to talk over their spiritual problems and to seek guidance and help. Carrol came too. But she didn't come for help. As soon as she sat down, she began to chat about old times. It was what we call "small talk." She was careful, however, not to get onto the topic of religion, except to make it clear that she was no longer a Christian.

There are times when we can, under the direct tutelage of the Holy Spirit, do things which are out of the ordinary, as I did that day while visiting with Carrol. It is my opinion that most continued backsliding takes place not from choice, but from the loss of hope. When Carrol let down in her daily devotions of prayer and Bible study, she backslid. Then Satan told her there was no hope of her being saved. "We are saved by hope."⁶⁵ Therefore, we have right to claim the promise of 1 John 5:16 for a backslider. It reads: "If any man see his brother sin a sin which is not unto death, he shall ask, and he [God] shall give him life."

When Carrol made the statement, "I am not a Christian anymore," I quickly replied with a smile, "But you are going to be one again, I know!"

"No," retorted Carrol. "I am not going to be a hypocrite and pretend. You know how much I love you folk, but I have really decided—this is not for me."

"But God is going to show you how you can receive the power you need to serve Him," I beamed back.

"No!" replied Carrol, this time with much more definiteness. "I just will not be a hypocrite."

"I am going to claim a Bible promise for you, Carrol," I said, "and God is going to fulfill this promise to me this week."

To put a time limit on God was a new experience for me. I just don't do it. But I felt strongly impressed to do it this time.

Carrol became more determined. "No, I'm *not* going to be a Christian, I tell you," she said with finality.

"Oh, yes, you are, Carrol," I repeated again with a smile. "I have asked, and I believe, and I am claiming God's promise to save you, and my Lord is going to hear and answer my prayer before this very week closes."

Carrol was frowning noticeably and shaking her head defiantly. Our friendship almost seemed at stake. But Carrol knew in her heart that I loved her and believed in her sincerity. She had forgotten that a righteous life comes from God and can only be sustained daily by His keeping power.⁶⁶

"Just promise me one thing, Carrol," I said, "that you will attend the meetings this week, whatever else you do." Carrol promised, and we parted friends. But Carrol knew I was storming the throne of grace for her. She decided to attend the meetings but to leave the meeting place at the time we extended our invitation for decisions for Christ.

We held two meetings each day—one at the chapel hour in the forenoon, the other in the evening at the large church tabernacle. Thursday night an altar call was extended. As the call began, I noticed Carrol slip down the aisle and through the back door.

Hundreds of young people responded that evening to the sweet voice of the Holy Spirit. It was one of the most rewarding altar calls I had ever witnessed. Scores of backsliders came to the altar with tears streaming down their cheeks. Others came to the Lord in the chapel service the next morning, many of them were returned servicemen whose emotions were not always obvious. I saw only one big tear on the cheek of a GI as he joined the others. What a wonderful service it was! As usual, and true to her word, Carrol was present, yet again she left as the call for surrender was made. Time was running out. And Carrol knew it. Yes, she knew that our meetings would soon be over.

On Friday night another call was extended. Still others responded. Among them was a young man whom I had known years before. He felt he had gone too far in his backsliding. But we explained the expansiveness of God's mercy, and he made his decision and found the peace he was looking for. Again, Carrol slipped out of the auditorium just as the call was begun. She had been present for the services, as she had promised; but she felt she could not stay for the altar call.

Our last service was conducted on Sabbath morning at the eleven o'clock hour. Carrol decided she would break her promise to us and absent herself for the entire morning service, including Sabbath School. That way she felt she would not be under the pressure to decide for Christ. It had been a powerful week. Everywhere there were young people rejoicing over the merciful salvation of our Lord, so full, so free. The spirit of victory filled the air.

Carrol was afraid that if she attended the last morning service she might not be able to maintain her resistance. Yet she was sure that if she did surrender to the Lord she could not hold out. She did not understand, "For it is God which

worketh in you both to will and to do of his good pleasure."⁶⁷

She said to herself, "I'll slip over and say good-bye to the Coons at the close of the service. They probably won't know I wasn't present."

"When it was about time for the service to close," reported Carrol later, "I made my way over to the tabernacle. As I drew near, I heard singing. Assuming it was the closing song, I stepped into the rear of the tabernacle. Something seemed to draw me down the aisle. On my way to the front a lady expressed some word of appreciation that I was surrendering my heart to the Lord. That hardened me, and I turned right around and stalked out of the tabernacle. I returned to the dormitory and decided to wait until I saw the people coming out of the building.

"Growing a little weary of waiting, I ventured over to the meeting once again. I slipped in the doors, hoping no one would notice me. The call was still in progress. People were still coming down the aisles. Before I realized what was taking place in my soul something seemed to be drawing me. An unseen power guided me right up the aisle again. Suddenly I was standing at the altar. But I was almost angry. I didn't want to be there, and I felt your prayers had forced me to the altar.

"I was indignant that I had come as I stood there, staring you in the face and blaming it all on you. There were so many people at the altar that you didn't notice me. You had no idea what had happened."

I interrupted Carrol, "Yes, I did notice you as you stood there glaring at me. I was offering a prayer based on a new covenant promise that God made in Acts 5:31. Here is what it says: 'Him hath God exalted with his right hand to be a Prince and a Saviour, for to give repentance . . . and forgiveness.' And then, Carrol, I prayed this prayer publicly: 'Dear Lord, there are people standing here at this altar this morning who have come for repentance. Please fulfill Thy promise and give them the repentance Thou has promised.' I asked, I believed, I returned thanks that I had received the answer."

Carrol said, "While you were praying, God changed my heart." Then she added, "You can't imagine the hell I've passed through this past week." Then with glowing countenance she beamed, "But now it's like heaven in my heart."

Friends, Carrol received the righteousness of God that day by faith. We thanked God together, and as I shook her hand, I spoke confidently of the great blessing she could yet be to the cause of God.

What a change takes place in the human heart when Christ takes control. He will do the same for each of us if we will only let Him. This sanctifying work is that of the Holy Spirit. And it is by faith that Carrol continued to grow in grace. The holy Sabbath was given by our Creator as a sign of His almightiness to sanctify, to make men holy."⁶⁸

But why should we doubt His power, when "the world was made by him."⁶⁹

Dear reader, we invite you to come just now and let our Lord both forgive your sins and cleanse you from all unrighteousness. Will you join, wherever you are, in singing the following song as if we were sitting together? And when you are through singing, will you fall on your knees or even pray where you sit, if it is too public to kneel, and tell God you are a sinner? Then ask, believe, and claim His promise of forgiveness and cleansing and eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.⁷⁰

Just as I am, without one plea
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bid'st me come to Thee,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am, and waiting not
To rid my soul of one dark blot,
To Thee, whose blood can cleanse each spot,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am, though tossed about
With many a conflict, many a doubt;
"Fighting within, and fears without,"
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am, poor, wretched, blind;
Sight, riches, healing of the mind,
Yea, all I need, in Thee to find,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am, Thou wilt receive,
Wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve;
Because Thy promise I believe,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

Just as I am, Thy love I own
Has broken every barrier down;
Now to be Thine, and Thine alone,
O Lamb of God, I come, I come.

—Charlotte Elliot.

PS. As we have been going through the above song, we have visualized readers of this book coming to Jesus in simple faith. It has seemed that we could see the tears of repentance in your eyes and trickling down your cheeks.

And if we never meet in this world, we shall meet around His throne. There with the canopy of His rainbow of mercy and eternal salvation we shall sing, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." We shall join "every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them," in singing "Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."?"

RIGHTEOUSNESS BY FAITH

If we will be believing,
Our Lord will vict'ry give,
If we will take, receiving,
His life we each may live.

To doubt is disobeying,
And doubt but brings us death,
Believing is obeying,
So trust with ev'ry breath.

Reflection: As your personal prayer circle, or you personally, conclude this book, may we prayerfully suggest that man's part is to struggle to believe God, to take Him simply at His word.

May we give our attention to the following great Bible facts:

1. We are not saved by works (Ephesians 2:8, 9).
2. Yet we are "created in Christ Jesus *unto* good works" (Ephesians 2:10).
3. We may confess our sins and find forgiveness (1 John 1:9).
4. Our sins are covered as we confess (Psalm 32:1).
5. The holy Sabbath day stands for a believing rest in Jesus rather than for a working off of the debt of sin (Hebrews 4:4-10).
6. We should "labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief" (Hebrews 4:11).
7. The great struggle of life is one of faith. "Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold of eternal life" (1 Timothy 6:12).

References:

1. Ephesians 2:8-10.
2. See Romans 5:1.
3. See Romans 3:24.
4. See Romans 5:9.
5. See 1 Corinthians 6:11.
6. See Romans 5:16.
7. See Romans 3:26.
8. See 1 John 1:9.
9. See Psalm 32:1.
10. Romans 4:7, 8.
11. Romans 4:3-5.
12. See Hebrews 4:4-10.
13. Hebrews 4:10.
14. 1 Timothy 6:12.
15. Hebrews 4:11.
16. Mark 11:24.
17. John 11:41.
18. See Philippians 4:19.
19. See 2 Corinthians 5:17.
20. See Acts 5:31.
21. See Ezekiel 36:26.
22. See 1 Corinthians 15:57.
23. See Romans 6:23.
24. See Hebrews 11:6.
25. Philippians 2:13.
26. Philippians 4:13.
27. See Galatians 1:4.
28. See 2 Corinthians 5:20, 21.
29. Philippians 1:21.
30. Galatians 2:20-22.
31. Jeremiah 2:22.
32. Romans 7:14-16.
33. See Genesis 2:1-3.
34. See Exodus 20:8-11.
35. Psalm 33:9.
36. Psalm 51:10.
37. Isaiah 66:22, 23.
38. Hebrews 11:6.
39. Hebrews 10:38.
40. Psalm 33:6.
41. 1 Timothy 6:12.
42. See Ezekiel 36:26, 27.
43. Colossians 1:14, 16.
44. See Psalm 51:10; Ezekiel 36:26, 27.
45. See Matthew 28:18-20.
46. See 1 John 1:9.
47. 1 Corinthians 1:30.
48. Ephesians 2:10.
49. See Hebrews 9:14-23.
50. See 1 Peter 1:18, 19.

51. See Hebrews 9:22.
52. See 1 John 1:7.
53. See 1 John 1:9.
54. See Galatians 3:15.
55. See 1 Corinthians 11:23-26; Romans 6:3-6.
56. See Matthew 3:13-17; John 13; Matthew 26:23-28.
57. See Romans 2:29; Galatians 3:29.
58. See Exodus 31:16, 17.
59. 2 Corinthians 5:17.
60. See Hebrews 8:10.
61. See Ezekiel 36:26, 27.
62. Hosea 14:4.
63. 1 John 5:16.
64. See Romans 5:16.
65. Romans 8:24.
66. See John 15:5.
67. Philippians 2:13.
68. See Ezekiel 20:12.
69. John 1:10.
70. See 1 John 1:9; 2:25.
71. Revelation 5:12, 13.